HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY 250

Today's The Herald-Palladium included inside

Gus Macker basketball made its return to Benton Harbor, **Page B1**

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Dowagiac News

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Cass Family Clinic's Summer Greeter Program returns

Program provides paid job opportunities to 19 local high schoolers

By PMG STAFF

CASSOPOLIS — Cass Family Clinic is welcoming 19 local high school students this summer through its Summer Greeter Program, providing paid work experience and exposure to careers in healthcare.

Students from Berrien Springs, Buchanan, Cassopolis, Dowagiac, Edwardsburg, Marcellus, Niles and Three Rivers Home School districts in Southwest Michigan, and Penn Harris Madison school district in Northern Indiana started serving as greeters at Cass Family Clinic on June 15. Students participating in the program are welcoming visitors, assisting patients entering the clinics, and gaining hands-on exposure to healthcare careers through job shadowing opportunities and professional development activities, at Cass Family Clinic's Cassopolis, Niles, and Dowagiac locations.

"We are excited to welcome our third group of summer greeters and continue investing in local students interested in learning more about healthcare careers," said Joe Gavan, CEO of Cass Family Clinic. "Not only does this program help students gain valuable workplace experience and develop professional skills, but our greeters also play an important role in creating a welcoming environment for patients and visitors. From offering directions and assistance, to simply greeting patients with a smile, these students help make a positive difference in the experience people have when they walk through our doors."

Applications for the Summer Greeter Program were distributed to local high schools in March, with completed application packets due in April. This year, Cass Family Clinic selected a new group of students in an effort to introduce more young people to the opportunities available within a family practice Federally Qualified Health Care Facility (FQHC).

See **GREETERS**, page A6

Photo provided

Nineteen local high school students are gaining healthcare work experience at the Cass Family Clinic through the Summer Greeter Program.

Photo provided

Fibrosan breaks ground on new manufacturing facility in Cassopolis, Michigan. From left to right: Michelle Grinnell – Chief Communications Officer – MEDC; Emilie LaGrow – Village Manager, Cassopolis MI; David Johnson – Village President, Cassopolis, Michigan; Erim Yucel – CEO, Fibrosan; Erdem Yucel – Owner, Fibrosan; Tolga Soykan – President, Fibrosan; Tahir Bora Atatanir – Turkish Chicago Consulate General; Terry Rubenthaler – President & CEO at Midwest Energy Cooperative.

'A new chapter'

Fibrosan breaks ground on new Cassopolis fiberglass plant

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

CASSOPOLIS — A multi-million dollar manufacturing project broke ground in Cassopolis this week.

Tuesday, Fibrosan, Inc. broke ground on a new fiberglass manufacturing facility in Cassopolis that is anticipated to generate more than $16.8 million in capital investment and create 35 new jobs in Phase 1.

Anticipated to become operational March 2027, the facility represents the company's investment in its operational capabilities, long-term growth and commitment to delivering exceptional value to its customers. A planned Phase 2 expansion will likely triple the facility's production capacity, further strengthening Fibrosan's ability to serve growing customer demand in North America.

Fibrosan's expansion is driven by sustained demand from US-based RV manufacturers and the operational challenges associated with supplying the market exclusively from its existing production facilities overseas. By establishing a domestic manufacturing presence, the company will be able to significantly improve responsiveness, reduce logistics and inventory carrying costs and better align production with customer demand.

"This project represents exactly the kind of investment that strengthens the long-term sustainability of the Village of Cassopolis. We are thrilled to welcome this family-owned company to our community and are confident this will be a strong and lasting partnership that benefits Cassopolis for generations to come," said Cassopolis City Manager Emilie G. LaGrow, Esq. "We are grateful to Governor Whitmer and the MEDC for the Make It in Michigan strategy, which continues to focus on people, places, and projects that drive meaningful economic growth. Through this investment by Fibrosan and the continued support of our state partners, Cassopolis remains a strong model of the important role rural communities play in Michigan's economy. I am exceptionally proud of the work of our Village team and thankful for the support of Village President David Johnson as we worked together to bring this project to Cassopolis, proving once again that the Village of Cassopolis is small, rural and exceptional."

To ensure this investment happens in Michigan, the Michigan Strategic Fund has approved support for this investment through a $200,000 Michigan Business Development Program performance-based grant. In addition to job creation, the project will establish the company's first U.S. manufacturing operation, anchoring a long-term presence in Michigan while positioning it for future growth.

"This facility is not the result of a decision we made recently. It is the result of a journey that started more than twenty years ago," said Erim Yucel, CEO of Fibrosan. "Over those years, we invested in people, technology, capacity, and relationships. We learned the market, listened to our customers, and earned their trust and confidence step by step. Today, breaking ground in Cassopolis is not the end of that journey. It is just the beginning of a new chapter.

See **FIBROSAN**, page A5

Cassopolis approves new master plan

By JUSTIN FLAGEL
Leader correspondent

CASSOPOLIS — The Cassopolis Village Council held a special meeting Monday, June 22 in place of their regular June meeting to review their new Master Plan and handle other business.

The Master Plan presentation by Progressive Companies emphasized the ways Cassopolis has already transformed since the adoption of its last Master Plan in 2019, highlighting completed goals such as the redevelopment of Stone Lake Beach, construction of new Village Municipal

Complex, infrastructure buildouts and improvements to streetscapes, facades and commercial buildings.

The plan pointed to four new goals for the village, including supporting "the Village's high quality of life and small-town feel," improving sidewalks, trails and other amenities for pedestrians and bikers, and increasing housing in the village. The council later voted for approval of the plan.

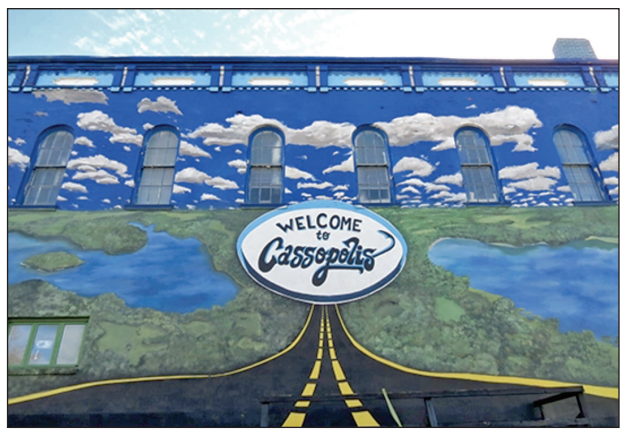
The council also approved budget amendments for the 2025-2026 fiscal year, adjusting for changes and anticipating where the village will end the fiscal year.

Trustees awarded an upcoming project to S&S Directional Boring, Ltd. based on the bids submitted. The project continues work to address aging sections of the force main after several failures.

Village Manager Emilie LaGrow reported that Cass County was one of two counties selected as a pilot program for the Full Home Performance Initiative, which could bring additional funding to housing rehabilitation in the area. She also shared an alert from the county about fraudulent invoices that had been sent to residents under the name of the Planning Commission, noting that local municipalities handle planning commission items.

LaGrow also discussed the village's upcoming renewal of insurance with Decker Insurance for the 2026-2027 fiscal year, noting an estimated 11 percent increase. Decker will be reviewing the new additions to the beach before providing the update.

The next regular village council meeting will take place at 6 p.m. Monday, July 13. The Cassopolis Area Utilities Authority will meet at 3:30 p.m. Monday, July 20.



Dowagiac's Festival Friday to be held July 17

By PMG STAFF

DOWAGIAC — The Greater Dowagiac Chamber of Commerce invites residents and visitors to kick off a weekend of summer fun during Festival Friday on Friday, July 17.

Celebrating the spirit of America's 250th anniversary, Festival Friday aims to capture a small-town, down-home vibe with shopping, dining, activities and community events throughout Dowagiac.

While Front Street serves as the heart of the celebration, businesses and retailers across the community will be joining in with sidewalk sales, tent sales, clearance events, restaurant specials, and family-friendly activities. The streets will remain open for Festival Friday.

One of the featured events is Imperial Furniture's annual tent sale, running from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Additional experiences include:

See **FESTIVAL**, page A6

Today's obituaries • Pages A3 and A4

Leo E. Byrd
Debra A. Fitz
Robert Gatz
Roger Dale Noecker
Peter 'Doc' Stelton
Margaret Wilson Christner Williams

Inside today's Herald-Palladium

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FRANKLY

Tips and quips

What is Frankly? It is where readers sound off on issues of the day. Have a tip or a quip? Call Frankly at 269-687-7700 or email rich.cains@leaderpub.com.

■ Congratulations to the Niles Lady Vikings who earned all-state honors in flag football. The sport is growing every year.

■ Bloomin' Fest and alpacas! It was a great day for a great cause.

■ Awesome job Dowagiac girls playing some awesome softball this year.

■ If you have pets, please do not leave them outside during hot summer days.

■ I just heard the Iran War is over, started, over, started, over, started.

■ It's great to have Chi Ishobak, a Native community development organization of the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi, become part of Dowagiac's downtown business area. Welcome!

■ Thank you to those working around the clock to help keep Niles' electric grid running.

■ Happy 250th, America.

■ Fibrosan will be a great addition to Cassopolis. Welcome!

■ People should not underestimate how dangerous the Dowagiac Creek can be.

WEATHER

Friday: A 40 percent chance of showers and thunderstorms, mainly after noon. Partly sunny and hot, with a high near 91. Heat index values as high as 98. Southwest wind 5 to 10 mph.

Friday Night: Showers likely and possibly a thunderstorm. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 70. Southwest wind around 5 mph. Chance of precipitation is 70 percent. New rainfall amounts between a quarter and half of an inch possible.

Independence Day: A chance of showers and thunderstorms, then showers likely and possibly a thunderstorm after 2p.m.. Partly sunny, with a high near 88. Southwest wind around 5 mph. Chance of precipitation is 70 percent.

Saturday Night: Showers likely and possibly a thunderstorm. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 68. Chance of precipitation is 70 percent. New rainfall a.m.ounts between a tenth and quarter of an inch, except higher amounts possible in thunderstorms.

Blooming Bus Farms hosts Bloomin' Fest

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

Maxwell Harden / Leader Publications

Blooming Bus Farms hosted Bloomin' Fest '26 on Saturday, June 27.

NILES CHARTER TOWNSHIP — A local business hosted more than small businesses from across Michiana for its festive summer event.

Blooming Bus Farms, 2617 S. 17th St., hosted Bloomin' Fest '26 Saturday, June 27. The artisan market featured more than a dozen local artisans and vendors.

"It's just amazing," said Blooming Bus Farms co-owner Melissa Rizzo. The community really knows how to show up and support good causes."

Blooming Bus Farms is a U-pick farm that focuses on regenerative agriculture and recently started a nonprofit to help at-risk teens.

"We employ at-risk teens. We remove barriers that stand between them and employment, like graduation, alternative schools, mentorship, whatever they need to cross that barrier," she said. "My husband has been in the trades for 30 years and he has all kinds of contacts to hook them up into careers with living wages. We help them find their purpose."

In addition to the outdoor market, live music was on hand featuring Inner-State Transit, Connor Millin, Marc Sucks and The Family Ferlic. The farm has alpacas that guests were able to interact with and there was also a u-pick flower field. A portion of proceeds will benefit One Good Deed Michiana, a nonprofit aiming to recognize Michiana residents making a difference in their communities. Founded by Hayes Freeze-Shelton, the nonprofit also hosts charity events to raise money for local causes.

This year, funds were raised on behalf of the Jeremy Diaz family of Niles. In 2020, Diaz was diagnosed with a brain tumor and has since been diagnosed with Parkinson's, Multiple System Atrophy and neurodegeneration and is also paralyzed from the knees down, relying on a wheelchair and the constant care of his wife, Lissa, and family.

As part of the festivities, Hayes Freeze-Shelton presented Brandywine graduate Kaegan Vansandt with a Robert Freeze Memorial Scholarship. The scholarship was created on behalf of Freeze to help college-bound students who reflect what Freeze stood for. VanSandt will be using the scholarship to help pay her schooling at Ferris State University, where she plans to study forensics.

"Kaegan is an incredible girl, Hayes Freeze-Shelton said. "She is an athlete. She is a leader at her school and her community. She makes people feel welcomed and feel better about themselves. She volunteers in our community and she's just an overall great, amazing kid."

Additionally, representatives from Indiana Michigan Power, where Freeze worked before his passing, presented Hayes Freeze-Shelton with a $10,000 donation to bolster One Good Deed Michiana and the scholarship fund.

"It was very unexpected. It just blew me away," she said. "We work really hard to raise money the whole year. We don't even make that much in a whole year of fundraising. All of the money that we raise, we put right back into our community and into our scholarship, so this means so much to have them give to us like that. It was a life-changing experience for him to work for them and once he passed away, they didn't forget about us. We're still a part of that family, and we feel that love from them. It was amazing to have them be here."

Rizzo was happy to showcase her space to the community and see the hard work of her team and volunteers pay off.

"Everything we do is with the intention of benefiting the whole community," Rizzo said. We always want to leave it better than how we found it. Anything we can do to benefit the Community like this, like scholarships, and helping Allison do her things, we just love being a platform for that."

SWMI chamber joins coalition against Prop 1

By PMG STAFF

ST. JOSEPH — The Southwest Michigan Regional Chamber announced their opposition to a Constitutional Convention (Con-Con), joining a bipartisan group of organizations across the state to urge a vote against Proposal 1 on the Nov. 3 ballot.

Representing a cross-section of interests and areas of the state, these groups are among several organizations working with Protect MI Constitution from Special Interests (PMCFSI) to encourage a "no" vote on Proposal 1, which will ask Michiganders whether to support calling a Con-Con.

According to a news release, this coalition is highlighting "the dangers of opening the state constitution to a rewrite that would hurt Michigan's economy and discourage investment."

The Southwest Michigan Regional Chamber of Commerce focuses on sustainable growth and economic prosperity in Berrien, Cass and Van Buren counties.

"A Con-Con is an invitation to uncertainty and division at a time when Michigan should be focused on growth and opportunity," said Arthur Havlicek, president and CEO of the Southwest Michigan Regional Chamber, in the release. "That kind of chaos threatens the progress we are making across Southwest Michigan and sends the wrong message to employers looking at the counties we represent as places to grow and invest. A strong economic future for our state depends on stability."

Group of tubers are rescued from Dowagiac Creek

By PMG STAFF

DOWAGIAC — A group of tubers were rescued from the Dowagiac Creek Tuesday by members of the Pokagon Volunteer Fire Department, the organization announced.

The PFD was dispatched Tuesday night to a group of tubers in distress on the Dowagiac Creek.

Crews quickly responded and began searching for the individuals. One of the firefighters, who is also a rescue diver, entered the creek near Arthur Dodd Park and swam downstream to reach the group. After locating them, a rapid medical assessment was completed, and the individuals were safely freed from fallen trees and other debris that had trapped them.

The firefighter then escorted the group approximately a half mile downstream through the swift current to a location where additional firefighters were staged to assist everyone safely out of the water.

The PFD stated that the incident served as an important reminder that the Dowagiac Creek is currently flowing fast and contains numerous hazards, including debris, fallen trees and complete blockages.

The PFD was assisted by Cass County Dispatch 911, Niles Township Fire Department, Niles City Fire Department and SMCAS.

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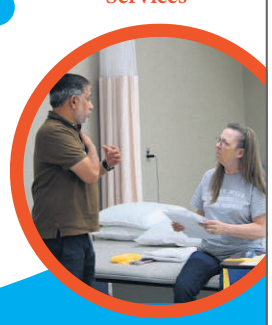
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OBITUARIES

Margaret Wilson Christner Williams

October 17, 1928 – February 2, 2026

Margaret passed away and A 97-year journey ended on February 2nd, 2026, and on to a new heavenly life. Margaret and Twin Sister MaryJane were born to Harry Otis and Margaret Belle Dilley Wilson from Berrien Springs, on October 17th, 1928. Shortly after the new family moved to Pittsburg, Pa. where Father Harry returned to His job of taking care of the company books for the U.S. Steel company.

Early life in Steel City and during the depression was full of sacrifice, but much love and caring. Harry maintained his employment, providing for his family and Mother Margaret provided a loving home, well-kept and full of wonderful homemade goods. Shortly after Sisters Helen and Anna May were born, then youngest Brother, Harry.

Now in Her 8th grade of schooling, War broke out and new way of life in a major manufacturing city became the norm. Rationing, Black outs, Air Raid Drills, scrap metal/material drives and being without question, a true sense of Great American Patriotism. The Twins and younger siblings still were able to participate in many school activities. Margaret and MaryJane took dance and ballet lessons, enjoyed going to Saturday Movies, riding the incline, enjoyed Big Band Music and of course were popular with the Boys, being known as the Good-Looking Twins.

Their upcoming Junior year of high school, 1945/46 saw the Twins being sent back to Berrien Springs to live with their Uncle Luther and Aunt Esther Dilley Burgoyne. The rest of the family would come to Berrien later, once Father Harry completed his employment and was ready to retire. With the war ending and meeting new friends at BSH, life was good.

Early in 1947, Margaret met a Dairy Farmer, Bill Christner, from Berrien Center who grew up on Smith Lake Road, Cupid struck hard, after a courtship that included many Saturday night Dances at Silver Beaches', Shadowland and movies at the Berry Theater , Bill proposed and after graduation that same year, Margaret and Bill were married.

Bill accepted a position with the Berrien County Farm to manage their Dairy Herd. Part of the compensation package provided housing on the Farm's campus. The housing was a 4-room dwelling, about 400 square feet. Some would call these shacks, but I can tell you theirs were the most well-kept, handmade curtains on the windows, and freshly painted shack in all of Berrien County. Bill and Margaret often said, "you don't have to be wealthy to have pride." The family vehicle was a 29 Model A Ford Truck, with a wired closed passenger door, but Margaret would attest the heater worked well.

This same year, Bill and His Brother Chris, home from War, were taken up to Pictured Rocks by their Uncle Henry, to Deer Hunt. They stayed in a cabin on Miners Beach. Bill instantly fell for the Great North, the Big Lake they call Gitchee Goomie and the area in general. This trip led to Bill bringing New Wife and In-laws North the next Summer. A few years later, Bill was able to buy that Cabin, in the heart of the Pictured Rocks. Trips North, going forward, happened often, like not only Bill, but Margaret and Ron, and soon Carol, along with other family members, equally loved this area too. The early trips saw the Mackinac Bridge being built from the decks of the car ferry crossing the Straits. More to come on this.

The County Farm job would lead Bill in late 1948 to City Dairy in Niles, owned by Bill and Art Saathoff. He accepted a job as a route Driver and bought a home for He and Margaret in the 17th hundred block of Howard Street. Settling into their new home and job, Son Ronald was born in April of 1949. Again, Margaret put Her golden touch on the modest home and made many friends in the area, and of course, the family Mom/Dad Wilson and siblings are back in Berrien Springs, Sister MaryJane now Married and living in Niles too and a Brand-New Car, with working doors.

Bill now off and running in his new position, Margaret saw to it, that His customers at minimum got a Christmas Card every year and often would acknowledge them with a Big Thank You for being a loyal supporter of the Dairy Products Bill sold.

A few years later, in 1951, Bill had an opportunity to be a Distributor of City Dairy Products, in New Buffalo. He, Margaret, and Son Ron, make the move living on East Michigan Street. The house, having a walk-in cooler in the garage, where Bill could store his products, and of course Margaret able again to put Her touch on the new home. In this new role she took care of the billing and paperwork for Bill's company, and as always, was sure to acknowledge the very people that supported the family business.

With the business doing well, Bill was asked to return to Niles and work for Saathoff's newly formed enterprise, United Dairies. He sold his operation in New Buffalo, and the family moved back to Niles. Margaret now soon to give birth to Daughter Carol, the family bought a newly built home in the 17th block of Cedar. Carol arrived in July 1954.

Bill's new role working for the Saathoff family was route Supervisor, Sales Manager, and eventually was named General Manager when the Saathoff family sold their business to Berrien County Milk Producers, mid 60's. All along the way, Margaret continued to acknowledge the customers supporting our family and took on a new roll of coordinating events for the team, Bill managed, whether it be a Christmas Party, Summer Picnic, Margaret had a talent of bringing folks together, being dubbed, Hostess with the Mostess.

Bill and Margaret became good friends with Jim and Alda Frucci, among other things friends do, were able to attend many Notre Dame Games as Jim had Season Tickets. All was good until ND played Michigan State, where Bill took some courses after the War and of course had to support the Sparties, however Margaret maintained Her ND support. This also included trips to Bowl Games which usually served as Winter Vaca for the group.

Now we are in the late 60's, industry is leaving greater Niles as well as other Michigan communities. Smaller Dairies are being bought by larger ones and was clear to Bill that to remain in this line of work, a move was needed. A hard decision it was, leaving a very tight and close family in Berrien County, but with Margarets full support, Bill accepted a position with The Kroger Company, Dairy Foods Division, in early 1970. This would take Bill and Margaret to Ft. Wayne, Indianapolis, where Kroger had just built and opened the largest Dairy in the U.S., and eventually to the Greater Cincinnati Area, where Bill was promoted to the home office and named National Sales Manager for All outside Sales. In this role, there was a new type of Customer Margaret would help Bill with. Again, events, outings, parties, where she made folks feel at home, entertained and well fed.

Bill and Margaret settled in Northern Kentucky, where they bought a condo as Bill began his new role. Around the same time, legislation established Pictured Rocks as a National Lakeshore. The National Park Service acquired 40 miles of Lake Superior shoreline from Munising to Grand Marais, Michigan. Within the park, cabins, homes, and other dwellings were purchased by the government, dismantled, and the land was returned to its natural state. It was a difficult loss for Margaret, who loved walking the mile-long beach in search of unique driftwood and one-of-a-kind stones, or enjoying the fall colors, and sheer power of the Big Lake.

The dwelling on Mother Superior now gone, thoughts of leisure time turned South and Bill n Margaret found a cabin on Lake Cumberland, close and easy to get to. Though was not the Great Lakes, it did have much water to navigate, scenery, and even driftwood. Was a great relaxing place to be. New friends were made and much memorable time was spent on into the late 80's.

Going into the last decade of the 20th century, would be a very low point for Margaret, Bill now gone and Twin MaryJane losing Her battle with Cancer, was a very sad time. Then a true Knight in shining armor appeared. This gentleman was a classmate of the Twins at BSHS. He had recently lost his wife to cancer. Hearing MaryJane was hospitalized in Niles, He made a visit and reconnected with both Margaret and MaryJane, reminisced about the school days and was able to warm the Twins hearts.

Shortly after, this Man named Lloyd David Williams, retired from the Berrien County Court System, of Coloma, made a few trips to Northern, Ky and rekindled relationships with Margaret. He and Margaret were married, and bought a home on Riverside Trail, in Berrien Springs, bringing Margaret back to where life had started.

Margaret and Lloyd, enjoyed many good years of traveling the U.S., going on gambling junkets, regulars dancing at the Round Oak on Saturday nights, attending Korean War Veteran events, with their good friends the Millers, and of course, supporting the local Legion Post 85 on a regular basis.

As it is with life, Margaret and Lloyd, now in their early 90's, got to the point where driving was not a good option and fortunately they both had presence of mind to know it. They sold the Berrien Springs house and moved to Northern Kentucky, where Daughter Carol lives. They settled into a Senior Style living area, where Carol and Her family, could tend to their needs, when needed. They both had their minds and health. Lloyd suddenly passed over the Christmas Holiday in 2021.

Margaret would remain in a Senior Living Center for a few more years, close to Carol and Pat, Carols husband, where she could interact with folks, play Euchre, and maintain Her own, meticulously decorated apartment.

Around age 95, Margaret moved in with Daughter Carol and Pat. Had Her own room, was still able to navigate, feed and clothe herself, and interact with Carol's Children/Grandchildren/Great Grandchildren.

She made one more trip to Her beloved Upper Peninsula at age 97, along with Carol/Pat, and Her Twin's Son Rick Locke, staying at Ron and Cyndi's place on Mother Superior. A Good time was had by all. We ate, drank, and spoke to happy times. We truly believed Margaret/Mother would see a 100, but God had a different plan.

Margaret was proceeded in death by Parents Harry O and Margaret B Dilley Wilson, Twin MaryJane Locke (Larry), Husbands Willis Dean "Bill" Christner, Lloyd David Williams, Sisters Helen Steinhilber, Anna May Conelley, Son-in-law Todd Carr, Sister-in- law Betty Wilson.

Carrying on Her legacy Son Ronald Dean Christner (Cyndi) of Laughing Whitefish Point, Mi., Daughter Carol Bradley Carr (Pat) of Walton, Ky, Grandchildren Jennifer Tritschler (Kevin Colwell), Tyler (Leann) Carr, Taryne (Ricky) Case, Great Grandchildren Cortlandt and Ashlandt Tritschler, Emmalynn and Griffin Carr, Ryan and Sloane Case, Great-Great Granddaughter Oaklynn Marie Tritschler, ALL of Walton, Ky. Brother Harry Wilson of Rowlett, Tx., Brother in laws, Don Steinhilber of Nashville, Tn., Kenneth Christner (Maryland) of Edwardsburg, Mi., Fred Connelley of Liberty Twp, Oh., and Honorary second Son Rick (Nancy) Locke of Crestview Hills, Ky. MANY other Beloved Family and Friends who Truly meant much to Margaret.

A graveside service Provided by Allred/Bowerman Funeral Home and words of Prayer by Nephew Don Steinhilber, will be held at Rose Hill Cemetery, Berrien Springs, On July 8th, 2026 at 1:30 PM. A gathering of Family and Friends thereafter at Legion Post 85.

Death notices

Debra Fitz, 70, of Decatur, died June 26, 2026, at Kalamazoo. Wagner Family Funerals

Leo E. Byrd, 82, of Vandalia, died June 23, 2026, at Fort Wayne. Wagner Family Funerals Connelly Chapel

Margaret Wilson Christner Williams, 97, of Formerly of Berrien Springs, died February 2, 2026, at Edgewood, Kentucky. Allred Funeral Home

Peter 'Doc' Stelton

May 26, 1940 – June 28, 2026

Peter Jon Stelton passed away on Sunday, June 28, 2026 at home with family at bedside from natural causes after a long Illness.

Pete was born on May 26, 1940 in Berwyn IL to John William Stelton and Edythe (Urban) Stelton and was preceded in death by his parents, in-laws Philip and Elizabeth Wilcox, sister-in-law Cynthia Wilcox Fletcher and brother-in-law Donald (Judy) Gofron.

He is survived by his wife Susan (Wilcox) Stelton, brother David (Dee) Stelton of Scottsdale AZ, sister Judy Gofron of Westchester IL, brothers-in-law Jeffry Wilcox of Glendale CA and Mathew (Jean) Wilcox of LaGrange IL, sisters-in-law Kate (Barbara Nieblas) Wilcox of Laguna Niguel CA, one daughter Christa (Tim) Hiddemen of Swedesboro NJ, three grandchildren Triss Wilbraham, Kaileigh, and Gabrielle Hiddemen of Swedesboro NJ and one Goddaughter Theresa Nucciarone of Indianapolis IN.

Pete grew up in Oak Park IL and spent every summer with extended family at Barron Lake in Niles MI. He especially loved cooking at the annual family pig roast and dancing on the tennis court.

He graduated from Oak Park River Forest High School in 1958 where he was a star member of the swimming team. At University of Illinois at Champaign he continued his stellar swimming career. He graduated in 1962 with a Bachelor's Degree in health education. He taught high school health education, physical education and driver education in the Chicago suburban area.

A conscientious objector, he enlisted in the United Army in 1963 as a medical corpsman in lieu of being drafted into a combatant role. He served in Asia on active duty until 1966. He remained in the Army Reserves until his honorable discharge in 1969 and later, served for 25 years on the Draft Board.

Following military service he worked as a surgical assistant at Loyola University of Chicago Hospital where he met nurse Susan Wilcox. They married in 1973 in Oak Park IL.

He attended the University of Illinois School of Dentistry in Chicago and earned a Doctor of Dental Surgery Degree. He and Susan moved the household in 1976 to Niles MI where he prepared to set up his dental practice. He opened his general dentistry practice in 1981 and retired in 2007. He became affectionately known as 'Doc' to his patients and Niles friends. He loved helping his patients, often going above and beyond providing special care for those in need like making house calls to the elderly and disabled.

Always with a quick wit and boisterous laugh, he was a friend to many and always quick to lend a hand to others. For years he met every day at 6 AM for coffee with his buddies at Martin's Supermarket in Niles.

Although never an admitted animal lover, he tolerated the many felines and canines that came into their fifty-two-year marriage and volunteered with Susan at Best Friends Animal Sanctuary in Kanab UT. An able carpenter, plumber and electrician, he meticulously completed many home renovation projects, eventually. He and Susan enjoyed hosting large parties, attending formal events and costume parties, traveling nationally and internationally and volunteering for charitable activities. After the premature birth of their daughter, he and Susan helped to found the Newborn ICU Parent Support Group of Memorial Hospital South Bend.

A member of St. Joseph Catholic Church in South Bend since 1984, he served the parish in many ways including lector, Eucharistic minister and cook at the parish picnic and spaghetti dinners. He also built the tables for the first computer classroom at St. Joseph grade school.

Doc will be missed by many.

Special thanks to Corewell Health Hospice for their care.

Visitation will be held on Thursday July 9, 2026 from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the funeral home and on July 10, 2026 at the church from 11a.m. to 12 p.m. A Mass of Christian Burial will be held at St. Joseph Catholic Church South Bend on July 10, 2026 at 12 p.m. A private interment will be held at a later date.

In lieu of flowers the family suggests donations to Pete's favorite charities:

Wounded Warrior Project: https://support.woundedwarriorproject.org

Children's Hospital of Philadelphia: https://give2.chop.edu

Best Friends Animal Sanctuary, Kanab UT: https://bestfriends.org

Or a charity of the donor's choice

Arrangements are entrusted to Brown Funeral Home in Niles MI. www.BrownFuneralHomeNiles.com.

Debra A. Fitz

March 21, 1956 – June 26, 2026

Debra Ann Fitz, 70, of Decatur, entered into her heavenly home Friday, June 26, 2026.

Her life began March 21,1956 in Manistique, Michigan, the first of four children born to Edmund and Kathryn Strawbridge. She married James E. Fitz, February 14, 1987 in Coloma, Michigan.

Debra graduated from Coloma High School in 1975. She enjoyed mission trips and volunteering at Grace Christian School and her Church. Debra was known as a giving and caring person. She organized the meal train, worked in the kitchen and helped with baby showers at Volinia Baptist Church. Debra's friendships meant a lot to her. She was active in her community and enjoyed doing arts and crafts. She made space in her home for her crafts but also for children to play. She could be found playing dress- up with grandchildren or riding her golf cart outside. Most of all she loved spending time with her family, especially her grandchildren.

Debra will be greatly missed by family and friends. She is survived by her husband, James E. Fitz, of Decatur; two sons, Jimmie L. (Elizabeth) Fitz of La Vernia, Texas, Robert J. (Thea) Fitz of Lawrence; nine grandchildren, Eden, Christian, Kaden, Benjamin, Ethan, Miriam, Hope, Faith, Mordecai; two great grandchildren, two brothers, Edmund Strawbridge, Rodney Strawbridge and a host of nieces, nephews, and cousins. She was preceded in death by her parents and her sister, Janice Kay Strawbridge.

Family and friends will gather Thursday, July 2, 2026 from noon until the time of her service at 1:00 p.m., in Volinia Baptist Church 19526 Marcellus Highway, Decatur. Debra will be laid to rest in Hamilton Cemetery.

The family prefers contributions in memory of Debra, be made to the family to defray funeral expenses.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Wagner Family Funerals Connelly Chapel, Cassopolis. Please share a memory or a message online: wagnercares.com.

Obituary policy

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For more information, or to submit an obituary, email obits@leaderpub.com.

See more obituaries on page A4

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OBITUARIES

Robert Gatz

Bob was born on April 17, 1948, in Chicago, Illinois, to Charles and Pauline Gatz. He graduated from Gordon Tech High School and attended Northern Illinois University before earning his carpentry degree from Washburn Trade School – the foundation of what would become an impeccable career in home construction.

In Chicago, Bob met and fell in love with his forever soul mate, Jean Anne Ernsting. They married on October 11, 1969, beginning a partnership that would span more than five decades.

In 1975, Bob and Jean Anne moved from Chicago to Sister Lakes, Michigan, where Bob founded Gatz Construction. His reputation took off like wildfire after building one little garage, and his craftsmanship became legendary – work that still stands proudly around Sister Lakes and throughout Southwest Michigan today.

In retirement, Bob and Jean Anne settled in Green Valley, Arizona, where Bob was in his element: lounging by the pool, enjoying good friends, playing dominoes, cheering on the University of Arizona, tinkering with DIY projects, and catching a concert at the casino. He loved helping anyone tackle their to-do list, had an extraordinary eye for design, and treasured his time volunteering with Equine Voices, where he got to be around the horses he adored.

Anyone who knew Bob knew his sharp humor, his sarcasm, and his extreme generosity. He was famous for a few well-timed one-liners – "whatever" and "you need to understand" among them. But his favorite thing in the whole world was his family.

Bob was preceded in death by his parents Charles and Pauline Gatz. Bob is survived by his beloved wife, Jean Anne; his children, Bryant (Alison), Stephanie Smith (Tim), Marcus (Janel), and Joshua; his grandchildren, Bailey, Sydney, Mia, Colin, Jordan, Hannah, Savannah, Marcus, Sam, Macale, Victoria, Jonah, and Gabe; and his great-grandson, Henryk; and his brothers Charles "Chuck" (Sharon) and Mark Gatz.

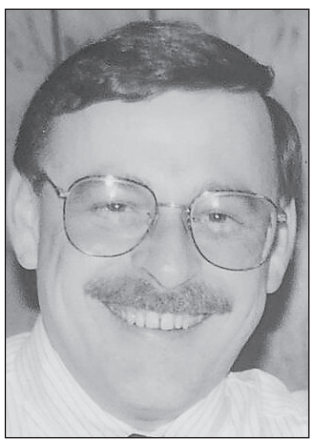
A private mass and burial will be held at Sacred Heart of Mary Church, 51841 Dixon Street, Dowagiac, MI on Monday, July 20th. The family welcomes all for a visitation following from 1-4 pm.

In honor of his legacy, the family has established the Robert Gatz Skilled Trades Scholarship Fund. Robert dedicated more than 35 years to the carpentry and construction industry, eventually building and operating his own business while serving countless families throughout Southwest Michigan. He took great pride in his craftsmanship, strong work ethic, and commitment to helping others. This scholarship will support students from Our Lady of the Lake Catholic School pursuing careers in the skilled trades, providing opportunities for future generations to follow their passions and make a meaningful impact in their communities. Through this fund, Robert's dedication to hard work, integrity, and service will continue to inspire and support those entering the trades for years to come.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Robert Gatz Skilled Trades Scholarship Fund via Zelle to Jean Gatz using the QR code online or check may be made payable and sent to: Our Lady of the Lake Catholic School Attn: Jennifer Ickes, 220 Church Street, St. Joseph, MI 49085. Please note in the memo line, "Robert Gatz Scholarship Fund."

Roger Dale Noecker

January 10, 1953 – June 20, 2026



Roger Dale Noecker, age 73 years of Niles, Michigan; father, brother, National-Standard retiree; fan of sports, fast cars, and eating died peacefully at 11:42 p.m. on Saturday, June 20, 2026 with his family gathered at his bedside at West Woods of Niles, following an extended illness. Roger had a great appreciation for the kind and compassionate care provided by the staff of West Woods, and for the fellowship of the patient community throughout his daily tours of the halls and community rooms.

He was born on January 10, 1953 in Niles to Fred R. and Doris M. (Watson) Noecker, and graduated from Niles High School. In his youth, he played baseball at Thomas Stadium, and had some success as a pitcher. He was employed at the former Niles plant of National-Standard as a production scheduler, retiring after 42 years of service. He has lived in Niles all of his life.

Roger was a hard worker, loyal to his employer, and took every available hour of overtime, but when away from work he bowled on area leagues, and enjoyed driving fast cars including a Dodge Charger and a Dodge Challenger. Perhaps because of that interest – or to atone for some clandestine speed – he volunteered with the former Niles Township Police Department. He was a longtime fan of the Detroit Tigers baseball team, the Detroit Lions football team, and college football at the University of Notre Dame.

Roger was very social, enjoying being with people, especially at events that included food. Family gatherings for Thanksgiving were a favorite, and after a full meal, he and his brother were careful to offer a piece of lemon pie to other guests ... before each consumed an entire pie! He seemed to have an extraordinary metabolism that allowed him to eat while remaining trim. He was even known to arrive early for cookouts, so that he might indulge his taste for a bit of hamburger ... before it was grilled.

In retirement, he enjoyed the fellowship of the crowds at the Four Winds Casino, and enjoyed winning. At West Woods, he was a friend to everyone in the building, both fellow residents and members of the staff, who could always direct visitors to Roger's last known location.

Roger was preceded in death by his parents, and by his sister, Barbara Evans on November 22, 2025, his brother, Harry Noecker on January 27, 2018, and by a stillborn sister, Betty Lou Noecker.

Surviving family includes his son, Adam (& R.J.Silva) Noecker of Chicago, Illinois; a sister-in-law, Janice Noecker of Niles; and a brother-in-law, Bill Evans of Niles; and several nieces and nephews, including Anita (& Orrin) Belcher, who provided his care.

The family of Roger Noecker will gather privately for Committal Services at Mission Hills Memorial Gardens. Arrangements were made at the Halbritter-Wickens Funeral Home, 615 East Main Street in Niles. Memories and condolences may be left online at: www.halbritterwickens.com.

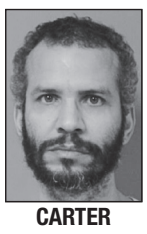
See more obituaries on page A3

Berrien Springs man gets prison time for robbery

By DEBRA HAIGHT
Leader correspondent

BEVANS

BENSON


CARTER

NILES — A Berrien Springs man who robbed a local gas station last fall and then drove his car into the St. Joseph River as he fled police is going to prison after being sentenced Monday in Berrien County Trial Court at the Niles Courthouse.

Joshua Michael Bevans, 40, of Berrien Springs, pleaded guilty to armed robbery and fleeing and eluding police and was sentenced to 10 years to 38 years in prison on the armed robbery count and credit for 288 days served on the fleeing and eluding count. He must pay a $326 in fines and costs and $740 in restitution.

The incident occurred Sept. 14, 2025 when he robbed the BP gas station in Berrien Springs. Bevans was armed with a handgun and fired it past the employee in the gas station before leaving the gas station.

He was spotted in his vehicle at Speedway gas station in Berrien Springs a few hours later and fled from police when they approached him. He drove into the river at the end of South Main Street and was apprehended and taken to jail.

Berrien County Chief Assistant Prosecutor Cortney O'Malley-Septoski asked for the 10 year sentence.

"This was an extremely serious offense," she said. "He shot off a round during the robbery and then led police on a chase before crashing into the river."

Defense attorney Carrie Briseno said Bevans is extremely remorseful about his actions that day. She noted that Bevans' previous record included only misdemeanors.

"The offense variables are high in this case due to the psychological impact on the victim with the use and discharge of his gun," Briseno said. "This is something I don't believe is indicative of his character. I'm not exactly sure what was going on but he had been under psychological care and had had a problem with his medication just prior to this incident."

"I want to say how sorry I am, this was totally out of character for me," Bevans said. "I'm glad no one was hurt."

Berrien County Trial Court Judge Gordon Hosbein noted that while no one was physically hurt, the victim has suffered long term emotional and psychological harm."

"I have to take all of that into account," the judge said. "Maybe it is an anomaly of your character but these were serious, serious actions that put a lot of people at risk."

Also Monday, two other area residents received prison terms.

Bruce Allen Benson, Jr., 26, of Eau Claire, pleaded guilty to attempted second degree child abuse and domestic violence and was sentenced to 18 months to five years in prison on the child abuse count and credit for 116 days in jail on the domestic violence count. He must pay $248 in fines and costs with restitution to be determined.

> **"The offense variables are high in this case due to the psychological impact on the victim with the use and discharge of his gun. This is something I don't believe is indicative of his character. I'm not exactly sure what was going on but he had been under psychological care and had had a problem with his medication just prior to this incident."**
>
> **CARRIE BRISENO**
> Defense attorney

The incident occurred Oct. 24, 2025 at a residence on Main Street in Eau Claire. A four year old at the home was rushed to the hospital after ingesting both amphetamines and methamphetamine.

Berrien County Assistant Prosecutor Myrene Koch noted that the child was made violently sick by ingesting the drugs and was in the hospital for a long period of time. Koch said the child still has ongoing medical appointments.

Briseno said Benson admitted to leaving the prescription drug on a table but that another person left the meth lying around. She called what happened "a horrible thing" but that Benson wasn't the only one involved.

Judge Hosbein noted that there was "significant harm" caused to the child whether Benson or someone else left the meth within reach of the child. He also questioned Benson's past statements that appeared to acknowledge knowledge of the meth.

"This is one of those terrifying consequences of having drugs in the home, children will find the drugs if they're not locked up. What you do to yourself is your own business, but it's disturbing to me when something happens to a four year old."

James Joshua Charles Carter, 40, of South Bend, pleaded guilty to possession of methamphetamine and was sentenced to 19 months to 10 years in prison with credit for 104 days served. He must pay $258 in fines and costs.

The incident occurred Jan. 2 in Niles Township when police stopped his car at U.S. 12 and South Third Street and discovered meth in the vehicle.

Search warrant leads to stolen property arrest

By PMG STAFF

HOWARD TOWNSHIP — A theft investigation led to the arrest of one individual Sunday in Howard Township, according to the Cass County Drug Enforcement Team.

Sheriff Clint Roach reports that his deputies executed a search warrant Sunday on a residence on Cogic Road in Howard Township. Deputies, with assistance from the Michigan State Police, were investigating the theft of a vehicle that took place Saturday night. That vehicle had been previously recovered, but during that investigation, deputies recovered a second vehicle that had been reported stolen in South Bend. Deputies also found stolen property from another nearby residence.

The arrested individual is currently a suspect for two additional vehicle thefts that took place in Niles. Deputies did not recover any additional stolen property related to other cases. The name of the suspect will be withheld pending his arraignment.

Anyone with additional information is encouraged to contact the Cass County Sheriff's Office at (269) 445-1560.

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Public Notice
State-managed oil and gas rights to be offered for lease auction

On Tuesday, October 27, 2026, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will offer, at an online bid public auction, approximately 5,000 acres of state-managed oil and gas lease rights throughout Arenac, Cass, Crawford, Kalkaska, Livingston, Macomb, Manistee, Missaukee, Montmorency, Newaygo, Oakland, Osceola, Otsego, St. Clair, and Wexford counties. More detailed information regarding location of the nominated parcels is available at *www.michigan.gov/minerals*, select *View the minerals management map*. Acreage may be withdrawn up to the date of the auction at the DNR's discretion.

Bidder registration will open September 27 at Minerals (mineralauction.info). Bids may be submitted by individuals of legal age, a partnership, corporation, or other legal entity qualified to do business in Michigan.

Bidders not on the authorized bidder list will be required to submit a $5,000 security deposit to register. The security deposit must be submitted by ACH bank transfer or wire transfer at least 48 hours prior to the auction start time. The security deposit will be returned to the registered bidder after all successful bids are paid in full.

Prior to the day of the auction, prospective bidders can contact Kim Venne at VenneK@Michigan.gov to confirm they are on the authorized bidder list. (In order to be placed on the authorized bidder list, the individual must have been a successful bidder at a previous state of Michigan oil and gas lease auction; not have an outstanding balance owed; and not be on the DNR hold action list.)

A preview auction catalog will be available in September, showing the legal description of the lands proposed to be offered and parcel classification. A DNR-approved auction catalog will be available after October 14 at Michigan.gov/Minerals select "Oil and Gas," or by contacting DNR-LeaseManagement@Michigan.gov (subject line should be AUCTION).

Written comments from interested parties relative to the classification of any description must be received by the DNR Minerals Management Section by October 12. Final approval of proposed classification will be set at the sole discretion of the DNR.

Offering of lease rights will begin Tuesday, October 27, at 9:00 a.m. at a minimum of $10 per acre. The successful bidders must pay the total bonus bid and a minimum of one year's rental by electronic fund transfer no later than 4 p.m., October 28th.

Suspect arrested following Dowagiac stabbing incident

By PMG STAFF

DOWAGIAC — A 56-year-old Dowagiac man was arrested Sunday after he allegedly stabbed a family member during an argument, according to the Dowagiac Police Department.

At approximately 5:10 p.m. Sunday, Dowagiac police were contacted at the police department by a male subject who advised that he had been stabbed. Officers located a stab wound to the victim's chest and began to provide immediate aid. Officers contacted SMCAS Ambulance who responded to treat and transport the victim. While speaking with the victim officers were advised that he was stabbed at a residence on Spruce Street.

The victim advised that he had got into an argument with a family member while at the residence. The argument turned physical and during the altercation the victim was stabbed by the family member. The victim then left and came to the police department to report the incident.

Upon the victim being transported to the hospital, officers made contact with the suspect at the residence. After speaking with him as well as other witnesses, the suspect was taken into custody.

Dowagiac Police arrested the 56-year-old male suspect from Dowagiac for assault with intent to murder. The suspect was lodged at the Cass County Jail. The victim, a 23-year-old Dowagiac resident, was transported to Corewell Health Lakeland Hospital in St. Joseph for treatment of his injuries that did not appear to be life threatening.

All charges are pending authorization through the Cass County Prosecutor's Office. The name of the suspect is being withheld pending his arraignment in Cass County 4th District Court.

How a tiny Caribbean island made American independence possible

By R. GRANT GILMORE III
College of Charleston
(The Conversation)

The American Revolution is often told as a heroic story of 13 colonies rising up against a mighty empire and, with some help from France, winning their independence.

But the real story is more complicated. As the United States approaches the 250th anniversary of its independence, it is worth remembering that success on the battlefield depended not only on courage and ideals, but also on trade, credit, shipping and access to military supplies.

The center of that trade was not the 13 Colonies – but south of Loyalist Florida, in the greater Caribbean. Here developed the center of the Atlantic economy due to the insatiable appetite for sugar that had grown across Europe by the late 1700s. The economic output of just Jamaica was the same as the entire 13 Colonies. The Caribbean economies depended on slave labor, trade and supplies from around the world to make sure the sugar flowed freely and tax revenues to European colonial powers were maximized. Much of that support flowed through a small Dutch island in the eastern Caribbean that few Americans know today: St. Eustatius.

Small but mighty

I'm a historical archaeologist, and for eight years earlier in my career, I lived on St. Eustatius and served as island archaeologist and founding director of the St. Eustatius Center for Archaeological Research.

Barely 8 square miles in size, St. Eustatius – or as residents call it, Statia – sits to the northwest of St. Kitts and Nevis. Without this tiny island, the Continental Army might have found itself without the arms, gunpowder and the supplies it needed to survive.

Statia's importance began with geography. The island rises steeply from the blue waters of the Atlantic and Caribbean. Its dormant volcano, known as the Quill, dominates the southern part of the island.

Unlike taller Caribbean islands, Statia did not receive enough rainfall to make it especially attractive for large-scale sugar production. That made it less valuable to the great sugar powers of the 18th century, especially Britain and France.

What Statia lacked in plantation potential, it made up for as a port. Oranje Bay, on the western side of the island, offered one of the deepest and safest nearshore anchorages in the Americas. Large merchant ships could come close to shore, unload their cargo and reload quickly.

Along the bay stood a long, busy waterfront, lined with warehouses, shops and trading houses. By the mid-18th century, this narrow strip of shoreline had become one of the most important commercial centers in the Atlantic world.

Imperialism through trade

The Dutch had settled St. Eustatius in the 1630s, around the same time they were developing New Amsterdam, now New York City. Dutch merchants, families and investors moved through a wide Atlantic network that connected Europe, Africa, the Caribbean and North America. These commercial ties created trust, credit and opportunity across long distances.

In the 17th and 18th centuries, European empires tried to control colonial trade through mercantilism. Colonies were expected to enrich the mother country by supplying raw materials and buying finished goods through approved channels. Taxes, tariffs and trade restrictions benefited imperial governments and favored merchants, but they raised costs for ordinary colonists, shopkeepers and planters.

British colonists in North America often resented these restrictions, but Dutch traders were willing to help them get around them. For generations, Dutch vessels carried goods throughout the Atlantic, often selling items at lower prices than British merchants could offer legally.

Archaeological evidence from sites such as Pope's Creek Plantation in Virginia, the Washington family home, shows the presence of Dutch ceramics, clay pipes and yellow bricks. Even before the Revolution, Dutch trade was woven into colonial life.

'The emporium of the world'

In 1754, the Dutch West India Company petitioned the Dutch government to make Oranjestad, the capital of St. Eustatius, a free port, and the request was granted. The result was extraordinary: Goods could move through the island with few restrictions and without the heavy taxes common elsewhere. The government profited from leases on land, warehouses and homes rather than from taxing every cargo.

Merchants from across the Atlantic world quickly took advantage. Ships arrived carrying textiles, tools, foodstuffs, weapons, luxury goods and raw materials. They also carried captive African people, forcibly transported within the transatlantic slave trade and subjected to sale, detention, labor and violence. Enslaved Africans and their descendants were essential not only to the island's plantations, but also to the households, waterfronts, warehouses and commercial networks that made this trade possible.

St. Eustatius became, in the words often associated with the island, "the emporium of the world." In modern terms, it functioned like an Amazon fulfillment center for the 18th-century Atlantic. Its prosperity, however, rested in significant part on slavery and on the unequal power that enabled imperial commerce to flourish.

Adam Smith, often called the father of economics or the father of capitalism, noticed. In his 1776 book, "The Wealth of Nations," Smith helped define economics as a modern field of study. Although he never visited St. Eustatius, Smith discusses the island, as it offered him a living example of what freer trade could produce: prosperity, speed, variety and commercial energy.

The same system that made the island rich also made it dangerous to imperial powers. Britain and France depended on controlled colonial trade, but St. Eustatius showed what could happen when goods moved with fewer restrictions. It also showed how merchants, credit networks and shipping families could challenge empires without firing a shot.

When the American colonies declared independence in 1776, they desperately needed military supplies. The Continental Congress knew that ideals alone would not defeat Britain. The new United States needed muskets, cannons, ammunition, uniforms, cloth, food and credit.

St. Eustatius was perfectly positioned to provide them.

The island's merchants had long-standing connections with North America, and some of the American founders knew these networks well. Alexander Hamilton, who grew up in the Caribbean, spent his youth in the commercial world of shipping, accounts and credit. His family had ties to the region, and the Caribbean trade helped shape his understanding of finance and power.

St. Eustatius soon became a lifeline for the Revolution. American agents used the island to buy and ship supplies. Cargoes moved from Europe to Statia and then onward to North America. Arms and gunpowder that might have been impossible to obtain through official channels could be purchased through this Dutch free port.

The First Salute

Then, in November 1776, a small but historic event took place in Oranje Bay. The Continental brigantine Andrew Doria arrived carrying a copy of the Declaration of Independence and flying the Continental Colors – the predecessor of the stars and stripes. Following maritime custom, the American vessel fired a salute. Fort Oranje answered with its own guns.

This exchange became known as the First Salute. Many historians regard it as the first formal recognition of American independence by a foreign power. The gesture was brief, but its meaning was enormous. By returning the salute, St. Eustatius publicly acknowledged the flag and authority of the new United States.

Britain understood the significance. The island was not merely a trading post; it was helping sustain rebellion. Over the next several years, much of the gunpowder, shot, cloth and other material that kept the American war effort alive passed through Statia's warehouses and harbor.

The story of St. Eustatius serves as a reminder that revolutions are not won by ideas alone. The American Revolution depended on farmers, soldiers, diplomats and political thinkers, but it also depended on merchants, sailors, warehouses and credit.

Without St. Eustatius, without Dutch trade and without access to a free port in the Caribbean, the United States might not have survived long enough to celebrate any anniversary at all. The Revolution was a struggle for political independence, but it was also a struggle over who controlled trade. In that struggle, one tiny island helped change the course of world history.

Grant Gilmore III is director of Historic Preservation and Community Planning Program at College of Charleston.

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FIBROSAN

From page A1

"We are proud to bring manufacturing closer to our customers, create opportunities in this community and build a long-term sustainable future in North America."

In addition to MSF support, the City of Cassopolis anticipates approval of a real property tax abatement in support of the project. The MEDC also authorized a State Education Tax abatement to be used in conjunction with the locally approved abatement.

"Fibrosan's investment is a monumental win for Cass County – creating quality jobs, strengthening our industrial base, and showcasing the momentum our region has been building," said Katie Multhauf, Economic Development Manager at Market One. "Market One is proud to stand alongside the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, Southwest Michigan First, the Village of Cassopolis, Midwest Energy & Communications, and many valued partners whose collective efforts helped bring this project to fruition."

Founded in 1983 as part of the family-owned Yücel Group, Fibrosan is a global manufacturer of fiberglass reinforced plastic laminates and composite solutions. Building on a business tradition that dates back to 1949, Fibrosan serves customers in more than 65 countries across the RV, commercial vehicle, construction, and industrial sectors. The company employs more than 450 people and operates with a strong focus on innovation, quality and long-term customer partnerships.

The company has experienced sustained growth since its first export in the early 1990s and the establishment of international subsidiaries, including the launch of Fibrosan Inc. in Elkhart, Indiana in 2016, positioning it to better serve the U.S. market. Economic conditions for the company are anchored in the global demand for lightweight, durable, and hygienic materials, and Fibrosan continues to invest in production capacity and innovation to support its market expansion and product development initiatives.

"Fibrosan's nearly $17 million investment and the creation of 35 new jobs represent a significant win for Cass County and Southwest Michigan. This project strengthens our innovation economy while building on the region's competitive advantages in advanced manufacturing and research and development," noted Carla Sones, Interim CEO of Southwest Michigan First. "We're grateful for the strong collaboration among our regional partners – especially Midwest Energy & Communications, Market One, and the Village of Cassopolis. Support from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation was instrumental in moving this project forward and underscores the state's continued commitment to fostering long-term growth in Southwest Michigan."

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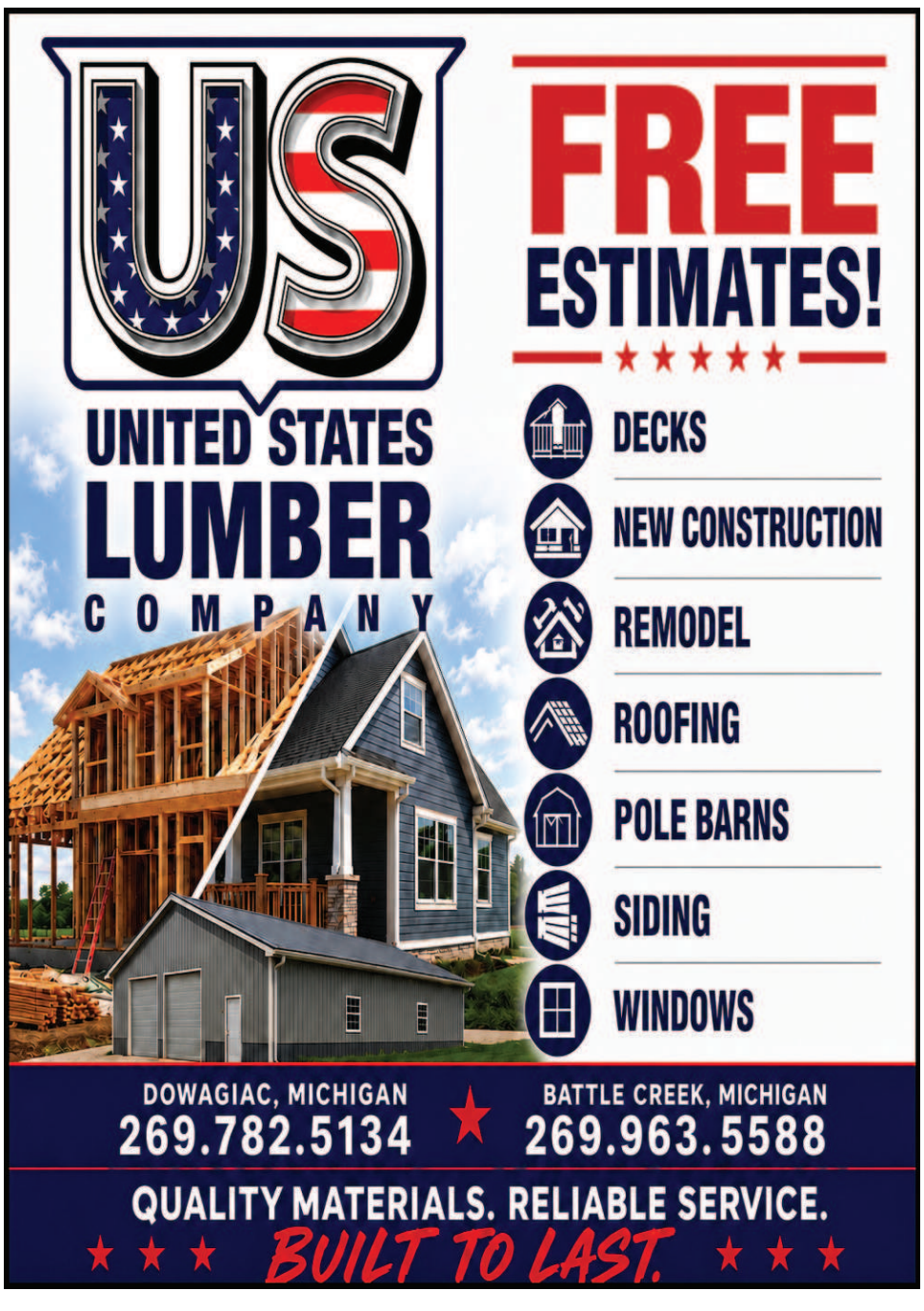


Pokagon Tribal Chair Wesaw headlines chamber luncheon

By MAXWELL HARDEN
max.harden@leaderpub.com

NILES — The Greater Niles Chamber of Commerce recognized area leaders who have helped the city and its businesses to flourish during its annual Chamber Pulse Luncheon Tuesday at The Morris Estate.

Presented by C&S Machine, the annual luncheon is considered to be the biggest networking event in the Niles region. The luncheon was headlined by Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Tribal Council Chairman Matthew Wesaw, who oversees a broad range of community development initiatives serving tribal citizens throughout Southwest Michigan and Northern Indiana. Wesaw was asked a variety of questions ranging from leadership, regional collaboration, economic development and the impact of strong community partnerships.

"It's always about education," he said. "There's so much that people don't know about the tribe. A lot of people think we moved in when we've been here forever. This is our community, which is one of the reasons it's so easy to give back because when we do something for the community, we're doing something for ourselves. We live here, our kids live here, our families live here, so anything we can do to help the community helps us."

Wesaw, a Bangor native, was a Michigan State Police trooper and detective sergeant from 1975 to 2001. He then spent seven years as a lobbyist with the Michigan State Police Troopers Association before being elected tribal chairman in 2008. This marks his fourth successful election as Chairman, the first time in 2008, and again in 2012, 2018 and 2024.

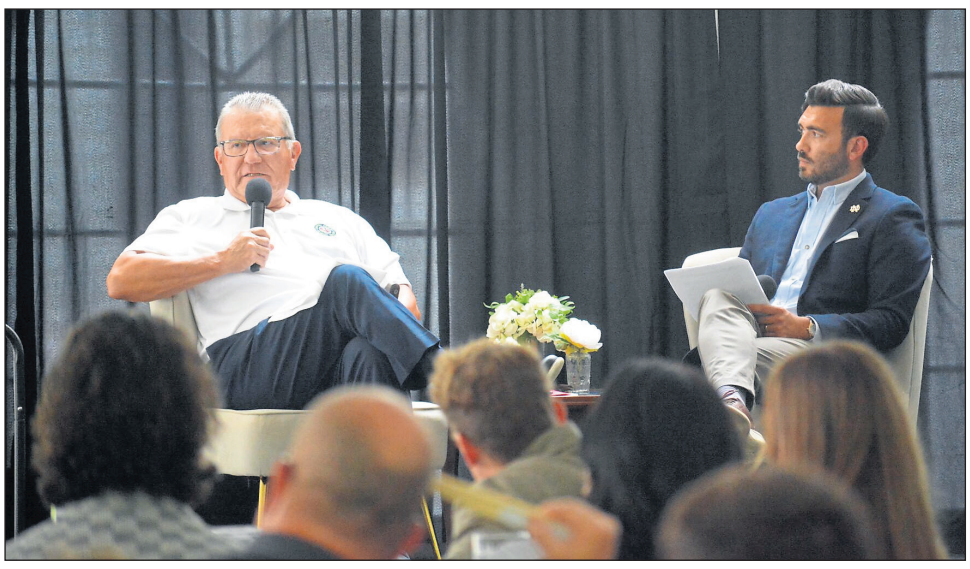
"For us, when we make a decision, we always talk about the next seven generations," he said. "Me being here today is a result of so many related decisions seven generations ago."

The Pokagon Band of Potawatomi's sovereignty was reaffirmed under legislation signed into law by President Clinton in September of 1994. The Pokagon Band is dedicated to providing community development initiatives such as housing, education, family services, medical care and cultural preservation for its more than 6,000 citizens. The Pokagon Band's ten-county service area includes four counties in Southwestern Michigan and six in Northern Indiana. Its main administrative offices are in Dowagiac with a satellite office in South Bend, Ind.

The tribe's economic development authority, Mno Bmadsen, and its community development financial institution, Chi Ishobak, are helping improve the business and financial climate for both Band citizens and the region. Between multiple tribal government entities and Four Winds Casinos in New Buffalo, Hartford, and Dowagiac, the Pokagon Band has put thousands of people to work, creating livelihoods and careers that benefit families and communities.

Last week, Chi Ishobak welcomed the Dowagiac community to its new office in downtown Dowagiac.

Chi Ishobak has done a great job helping our folks get back on track financially," he said. "It's not embarrassing, we're here to help. Don't worry about what you've done in the past, here's how we're going to get you back on track, so it's all about relationships. It's also all about making contributors, not clients. Anything we can do to help people get their life straightened back out, help them out. That's what it should be all about."

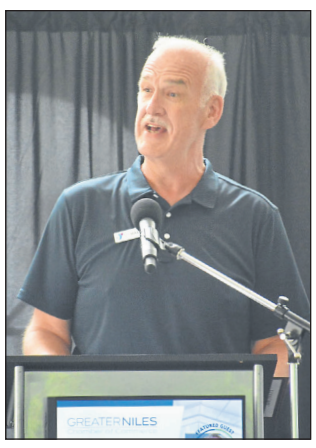


Photos by Maxwell Harden / Leader Publications

Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Tribal Council Chairman Matthew Wesaw speaks with Southwest Michigan Regional Chamber of Commerce President & CEO Arthur Havlicek during the Greater Niles Chamber of Commerce's annual Chamber Pulse Luncheon Tuesday at The Morris Estate.

2nd & Main owners Alishia Ransbottom and Dustin Jankoviak address the audience during the Greater Niles Chamber of Commerce's annual Chamber Pulse Luncheon Tuesday at The Morris Estate.

The Greater Niles Chamber of Commerce hosted its annual Chamber Pulse Luncheon Tuesday at The Morris Estate.



YMCA of Greater Michiana CEO Mark D. Weber speaks during the Greater Niles Chamber of Commerce's annual Chamber Pulse Luncheon Tuesday at The Morris Estate.

C&S Machine President and Integrator Shaun Phy speaks during the Greater Niles Chamber of Commerce's annual Chamber Pulse Luncheon Tuesday at The Morris Estate.

Local businesses, leaders recognized

The following people and businesses were awarded:

Small Business of the Year – The award was presented to 2nd & Main Coffehouse and accepted by owners Dustin Jankoviak and Alishia Ransbottom. The award is presented to a small business demonstrating leadership, innovation, business growth, community engagement and capital investment. 2nd & Main has become a community hub dedicated to providing Niles with a place to gather, connect and simply be. The coffehouse offers a variety of coffees, food, cold-pressed juices, craft cocktails and a full-service bakery. Every detail is thoughtfully curated to create a warm, inviting experience from morning to night.

Economic Impact Award – The award was presented to C&S Machine and accepted by President and Integrator Shaun Phy. This award is presented to a business or organization demonstrating strategic vision – combined with a substantial investment in the community – leading to economic growth for the greater good of the region.

Bob Harrison Community Leadership Award – This award was presented to Mark D. Weber. The award is designed to commemorate an individual, business or organization that has gone above and beyond the call of duty in their service to the greater Niles community.

GREETERS

From page A1

Throughout the summer, participating students will have opportunities to learn resume-building techniques, financial planning concepts, workplace soft skills, and interview preparation. They will also shadow providers and staff members in career fields that match their interests.

"I became interested in the summer internship program as a way to build connections with patients, learn what it's like to work in a clinic, and experience what a clinical environment is like," said Samantha Santiago, one of the new summer greeters. "I'm looking to learn how to be more compassionate with patients, and build more connections and trust with them, especially since I'm interested in working in the medical field. It will help me gain experience to know how to interact with my future patients."

"Our Summer Greeter Program gives students the opportunity to learn more about the healthcare field while building confidence and practical job skills," said Gavan. "By the end of the summer, we hope students walk away with a stronger understanding of healthcare careers and valuable experience they can apply wherever their future takes them."

FESTIVAL

From page A1

■ Children's entertainment at the Dowagiac District Library
■ Festive mocktails served by the Robotics Club at Who Knew Consignment
■ Free chalking lessons at Rosy Tomorrows,
■ Hot towels and hand massages at Front Street Salon,
■ Tastings of Stonewall Kitchen jams and dessert sauces at Cottage Gallery
■ Tarot Card readings at Olympia Books
■ Children's activities hosted by the Kyle Lott Farm Bureau Agency in partnership with Sweetest Union Bake Shop

Shoppers can also take advantage of the Over Under Apparel sale hosted by The Marshall Shoppe.

Festival Friday will conclude with Steve's Run, hosted by Southwestern Michigan College. The annual event features a 5K, 10K and Fun Run beginning at 6 p.m.

"Festival Friday is all about celebrating community and creating excitement as we head into the Dowagiac Summer Festival on Saturday," the chamber stated in a news release. "It's a great opportunity to support local businesses, enjoy hometown traditions, and experience the welcoming spirit that makes Dowagiac special."

Complete details and schedules are available at www.dowagiacchamber.com and on the Greater Dowagiac Chamber of Commerce Facebook page.

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Accepting the challenge

Edwardsburg great Caitlyn Tighe finds new home on the diamond with the Iowa Hawkeyes

By KEN FOX
Paxton Media Group

Caitlin Tighe has never been afraid of a challenge.

Rather than playing her senior year of softball at Edwardsburg High School, Tighe left early to play at Western Michigan instead.

Now, after an outstanding junior year at Western, Tighe will be moving to the University of Iowa for her senior season.

"Overall, I loved my experience at Western and my teammates were great," Tighe said. "This is more about being challenged and developed as a player and building on what I've already learned about the game."

Last season Tighe hit .337 for the Broncos with 12 doubles, three triples and 10 home runs and 38 RBIs. She also led the team in stolen bases and was tied for the lead in homers as the team's shortstop.

She was second-team All-Mid American Conference, on the first team All-MAC tournament team and a member of the conference All-Academic team.

And one of her homers last season came close to home at Melissa Cook Stadium in a loss to Notre Dame.

When asked why Iowa, Tighe had an honest answer.

"I admit, when I got into the portal, Iowa was not on my radar," Tighe said. "No one considers them a great program yet, but the coaching staff is really good and they're working on rebuilding the program (Hawkeyes were 27-27 last season). I looked things over and was interested, so I decided to check it out.

"When I got to the campus, it was so nice and the softball field was really great too. When we sat down and talked to the coaches, everything seemed very genuine about building the program. Plus, coach Stacy (head coach Stacy May Johnson) is an alum, so I don't think she'll be looking to go to a bigger school."

See **TIGHE**, page B2

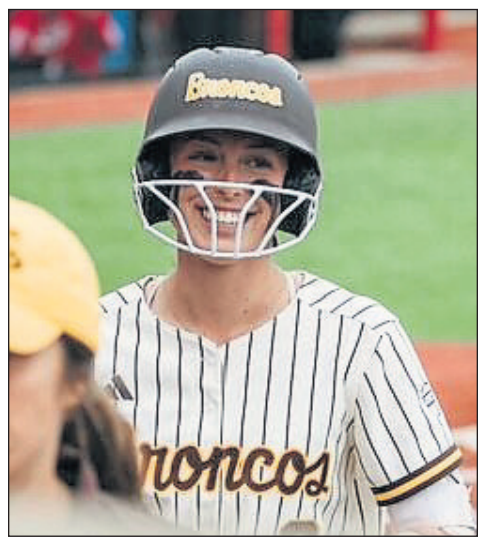

Photo provided

Caitlin Tighe, an Edwardsburg grad, will be transferring from Western Michigan to the University of Iowa for her senior year of softball.

Gus Macker in play

Benton Harbor draws crowd at hoops tourney

PMG STAFF

BENTON HARBOR — It took 25 years, but Gus Macker basketball made its return this weekend to Benton Harbor.

The Gus Macker 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament fielded 105 teams across two days of play along Riverview Drive at Britain Avenue.

On Saturday, the Detroit Pistons Dunk Team performed in front of a large crowd.

Rodney Alexander Jr. of the Harbor Impact Foundation said about 3,000 people were in attendance for the weekend event.

"It went really fast. It was an eight- to 10-month process as far as planning goes," he said. "There are a lot of lessons to be learned for the next one. I learned it's good to have as many backups as possible. It was surreal to see all the smiles and people happy. I didn't sleep until Sunday night, but it was worth the time."

Harbor Impact teamed up with the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi and its Four Winds Casinos, along with other sponsors to put on the event.

The double-elimination tournament was open to teams in three categories – junior, adults and top level, with different brackets for male and female teams from age 8 to 80.

Gus Macker used computer matching to assure teams of similar heights and abilities, event organizers said.

Photos by Don Campbell / HP staff

Teams compete during the Gus Macker on the River 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament on Saturday along Riverview Drive in Benton Harbor.

Youth basketball players run through a tunnel as they take the court during the Gus Macker on the River 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament on Saturday in Benton Harbor.

Teams compete during the Gus Macker on the River 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament on Saturday in Benton Harbor.

Teams compete during the Gus Macker on the River 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament on Saturday along Riverview Drive in Benton Harbor.

Former Southwestern Michigan College basketball player Davion Goins grabs a rebound during the Gus Macker on the River 3-on-3 Basketball Tournament on Saturday in Benton Harbor.

New Dallas Mavericks coach Dusty May smiles while responding to a question during his introductory news conference in Dallas on June 29.
Schuyler Dixon / AP

Dusty May says he's ready for jump to Mavs

By SCHUYLER DIXON
Associated Press

DALLAS — Dusty May's only dream growing up was coaching high school basketball in his home state of Indiana.

That's not to say he isn't ready for the jump from college to the NBA with the Dallas Mavericks after leading Michigan to its first national championship in 37 years this past spring.

"This is all too big of a dream," May said Monday at his introductory news conference, a week after news broke that the Mavericks were close to a deal with the 49-year-old with an impressive college resume.

"I did start preparing for this years ago, going to watch and trying to figure out if I could do this well. But as far as dreaming about coaching in the NBA, I never dreamed of coaching in the NBA, of coaching college, of coaching anywhere other than just being a coach in high school in my state. So as far a dream, no, this wasn't a dream. But now, I've been preparing for this, to go against the best, for a long time."

See **MAY**, page B2

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Lions have released Arnold, who is charged over kidnappings

By JOHN HANNA
Associated Press

Jefferee Woo / Tampa Bay Times

Terrion Arnold, a Detroit Lions cornerback, shakes hands with his attorneys R. Timothy Jansen, left, and A.J. Alvarez, during the conclusion of his pretrial detention hearing at the Hillsborough County Courthouse on June 29 in Tampa, Fla.

The NFL's Detroit Lions on Monday released cornerback Terrion Arnold, only days after his arrest over allegations that he orchestrated the abduction and beating of three men who prosecutors believe he wrongly suspected of having stolen luxury goods and $100,000 in cash from him.

The team made the announcement on the X social media platform. Arnold had two years left on his four-year rookie contract, worth $14.3 million.

The team did not give a reason, but the announcement came the same day that a Florida judge set Arnold's bail at $1 million. Prosecutors say the three victims, including a man who worked as a driver for Arnold, were robbed while being held at gunpoint in a Tampa apartment in February.

Prosecutors had wanted Arnold held without bond on the eight felony charges he faces. But Chief Circuit Court Judge Christopher Sabella granted bond to him.

The judge did not require Arnold to wear an ankle monitor because it would have prevented him from taking the field for games and training. The judge also said Arnold already has a "paparazzi monitor," referring to the photographers who have been watching his movements.

"If he shows up on a beach in Tahiti, he'll be on social media," Sabella said at the end of the bond hearing in Tampa.

Sabella said that although the charges are serious – each could bring a life sentence if Arnold is convicted – prosecutors are "not there yet" in having a strong case for Arnold's guilt.

The judge did order Arnold to remain at his home in Tallahassee except for when he's playing, training and traveling with the Lions. He also said Arnold cannot have any contact with other people tied to the case and must surrender his passport within 48 hours.

Arnold, 23, was a first-round pick in the 2024 draft after playing at the University of Alabama. He had 31 tackles and an interception last season as part of the Lions' defense.

According to prosecutors, the victims were abducted three days after cash and luxury items, including Rolex watches and Louis Vuitton bags, were reported stolen from Arnold at an Airbnb rental in the Tampa area. Prosecutors allege that six of Arnold's associates actually carried out the crimes, holding, beating and pistol-whipping the victims, and that Arnold wasn't there at the time.

None of Arnold's co-defendants had bond set for them. Two female co-defendants have pleaded guilty and are cooperating with authorities. Their statements tie Arnold, who was not at the apartment, to the crimes, according to prosecutors.

Prosecutors argue that Arnold is as responsible for the crimes as his co-defendants because he told his associates that he thought he knew who had stolen from him and said he wanted to confront them, setting events in motion.

"Our office remains committed to seeking justice for the three victims in the case who were beaten, robbed, and held against their will," said Erin Maloney, a spokesperson for the state attorney's office.

But Harvey Steinberg, an attorney for Arnold, argued in court Monday that prosecutors are "not even close" to showing that Arnold that he knew or directed what his associates would do.

Denise White, the CEO of EAG Sports Management, which represents Arnold, said before the Lions announced they were releasing Arnold that the judge's ruling "confirms that there is very little evidence to even suggest any criminal involvement by Mr. Arnold."

MAY

From page B1

Schuyler Dixon / AP

New Dallas Mavericks coach Dusty May, center, poses with his family, from left to right, son Eli May, wife Anna May, son Jack May and son Charlie May, during Dusty's introductory news conference in Dallas on June 29.

May spoke with new president of basketball operations Masai Ujiri to his left on a stage on the practice court of the club's arena. His wife and three boys were in the first row, with reigning Rookie of the Year Cooper Flagg right behind them.

Also in the crowd was Morez Johnson Jr., drafted No. 9 overall last week by the Mavericks as the first of three Michigan players taken in a span of four lottery selections.

Yaxel Lendeborg, the No. 11 choice before Aday Mara went one pick later, had jokingly accused May of playing favorites with Johnson. May has no problem with that characterization now.

"I'm on Rez's team now, so he's definitely my favorite," said May, who reiterated new general manager Mike Schmitz's message on draft night that May had little to do with Dallas picking Johnson. "Those guys, they had some friendly banter with all that. But the beautiful part of it, there was never any envy. These guys were each other's biggest fans. And that's one thing that we want to bring here to the Dallas Mavericks."

A sudden shift

May is replacing Jason Kidd, who was let go two weeks after Ujiri was hired. The Mavericks have missed the playoffs the past two seasons after reaching the 2024 NBA Finals behind Luka Doncic and Kyrie Irving.

The landscape shifted suddenly with the shocking trade of Doncic to the Los Angeles Lakers in February 2025. Nico Harrison, the engineer of that middle-of-the-night deal, was fired as general manager in November with the team off to a slow start last season.

Ujiri didn't come on board until after Dallas finished with a 26-56 record, its worst since losing 58 games the season before getting Doncic, the third overall pick in 2018.

Schmitz was hired days after Ujiri's introduction, and with the coaching staff complete, the Mavericks have wrapped up 17 months of upheaval by finishing the move into a new era.

"We want to bring joy back to basketball here," Ujiri said. "It is a goal and I know we're going to do it and I know the beginning of this joy and this goal starts here with this guy that we welcome as our basketball coach."

May's new roster

Flagg is the centerpiece of a roster that includes two veterans with NBA championship pedigrees in Kyrie Irving and Klay Thompson. Irving missed all of last season after tearing the ACL in his left knee in March 2025, a month after the Doncic trade.

Johnson has a chance to contribute to a frontcourt that includes 2023 first-round pick Dereck Lively II, whose career has been plagued by injuries, fellow center Daniel Gafford and forward P.J. Washington Jr.

Irving improves the outlook of the backcourt considerably, and the Mavericks on Monday exercised their 2026-27 contract option on point guard Ryan Nembhard, an undrafted rookie a year ago.

Flagg played plenty of point guard early in his only season under Kidd and has said he'll be better for it if he settles into a more familiar role as a wing or small forward.

"We have some really unique pieces," May said. "Masai said, we're here to win. When you have the nucleus we have, you can figure out a way to overachieve until you become the best team."

Easing the transition?

Seven years ago, another Michigan coach – John Beilein – made the jump to the NBA but didn't last one season. May has the advantage of his two seasons with the Wolverines coming in the era of players being paid for name, image and likeness.

May, who also led Florida Atlantic to its only Final Four appearance, sees "similar problems, similar issues, similar challenges" in college and pro games that are "closer than ever." He also sees limits to his advantage.

"It's like being a parent," May said. "You're never prepared, you're never ready. But hopefully you've prepared and done everything in your power to tackle all the challenges."

TIGHE

From page B1

Despite the strong statistics, Tighe admits the 2026 season at Western Michigan had its ups and downs. However, there was plenty of growth spiritually for the senior-to-be.

"The beginning of last season was rough and frustrating personally and I wish our team had done better in the conference than we did," Tighe said. "We had some games that should have gone differently if just a few little things had gone right for us.

"But at the midpoint of the season, I realized that I was defining myself through softball. So that's when I started to lean on my faith more and glorify God. That helped me both mentally and physically and I was happy with how I played.

"I think some of the valleys I went through helped motivate me for the highs in the season."

Tighe took a peek into the transfer portal after her sophomore year at Western, but decided to stay in Kalamazoo as a Bronco.

"I had a good year as a sophomore, but not a great year, but I knew I could perform at a Power 4 school," Tighe said. "But I guess my childhood dream school wasn't out there and I didn't want to be forced into going somewhere either. Plus, Western was a really good program."

"Again, it was God's protection taking care of me."

Going back even further, Tighe admits her freshman season was a challenge, after leaving Edwardsburg and enrolling early.

In her three years with the Eddies, Tighe hit .414 with 45 doubles, 25 home runs and 131 RBIs. She scored 141 runs for Edwardsburg on her 146 hits. She also stole 53 bases and twice hit three home runs in a game.

"I was just a baby coming in and I thought I was the best player in the area where I came from," Tighe admitted. "But I was humbled really fast. I wanted to be on the field for every game like always, but honestly I rode the bench for most of my freshman year. It was my humbling moment.

"I got into a dark spot, but in the last few years, I've realized everyone has to fill a role and make themselves useful on a team. One of my biggest pet peeves is being selfish. But I've seen the growth in myself over time, athletically, physically and spiritually."

Once she gets to Iowa, Tighe will have a year-and-a-half left to graduate. She's majoring in Business Analytics, which has helped her get a very cool summer job.

"I'm living in Massachusetts and working with the Cape Cod Baseball League," Tighe said. "With the knowledge I'm gaining this summer, my goal is to work with analytics with a minor league or major league baseball team."

The Cape Cod League is one of the nation's premier collegiate summer baseball leagues, which boasts over 1,000 former players who have gone on to play in the major leagues, including Thurman Munson, Billy Wagner, Kyle Schwarber, Carlton Fisk, Frank Thomas and Craig Biggio just to name a few.

Unlike in nearly every college game, all bats used in the Cape Cod league are wood.

While she's headed to the Hawkeye state to finish her career, Edwardsburg still has a place in Tighe's heart.

"There were so many people who bought into our program at Edwardsburg," Tighe said. "I'm very thankful to all of them, as well as my former teammates and coaches. They all played a part in my career to this point."

Ken Fox is the sports editor of The Elkhart Truth. You may reach him at kfox@elkharttruth.com or @KenFoxTruth on Twitter

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60296 M-62, Ste 10
Cassopolis, MI 49031
Court phone no.
269-4454454

Estate of: Katherine Rene Eckert, deceased
Date of birth: 11/16/1978

TO ALL CREDITORS: **

NOTICE TO CREDITORS:
The decedent, Katherine Rene Eckert died 01/11/2026.
Creditors of the decedent are notified that all claims against the estate will be forever barred unless presented to Brian Eckert personal representative, or to both the probate court at Cass County Law & Courts Bldg., 60296 M-62, Cassopolis, MI 49031 and the personal representative within 4 months after the date of publication of this notice.

Date: 06/25/2026

John P. Bush P31576
Attorney name Bar no.
208 W. Chicago Rd.
Sturgis, MI 49091
269-651-5380

Brian Eckert
Personal representative(s)
410 S. Fourth St.
Sturgis, MI 49091

PUBLIC NOTICE
The Penn Township Board of Review will meet on: Tuesday, July 21, 2026, at 5pm at the Township Hall 60717 Main St, Vandalia, Michigan. The purpose of this meeting is to correct qualified errors. NO VALUATION APPEALS CAN BE HEARD.
The July and December Boards of Review have different authorities than the March Board of Review. The July and December Boards of Review meet to correct Qualified Errors, and to consider appeals related to the Principal Residence Exemption, Qualified Agricultural Exemption, Taxable Value Uncapping, the Qualified Start-up Business Exemption, and Poverty Exemptions.

Contact Information:
Don Jollay, MAAO
Phone: **(815)546-8288**
Email:
PennAssessor@gmail.com
Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 69
Vandalia, MI 49095

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TOWNSHIP OF SILVER CREEK CASS COUNTY, MICHIGAN

NOTICE OF SPECIAL ASSESSMENT PUBLIC HEARING
MAGICIAN LAKE WEED AND AQUATIC PLANT CONTROL

TO: THE RESIDENTS AND PROPERTY OWNERS OF SILVER CREEK TOWNSHIP, CASS COUNTY, MICHIGAN AND ANY OTHER INTERESTED PERSONS:

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that upon motion of the township board, as authorized by PA 188 of 1954, as amended, the township board proposes to undertake an aquatic plant control project (with associated activities) in Magician Lake in Silver Creek Township (including all lands with frontage on Magician Lake in Silver Creek Township) as more particularly described below, and to create/recreate/continue a special assessment district for the recovery of the costs thereof by special assessment against the properties benefitted.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that the special assessment district within which the foregoing improvements are proposed to be made and within which the costs thereof are to be specially assessed is more particularly described as follows:

The properties indicated by parcel numbers:

14-130-003-010-00	14-130-166-006-00	14-130-265-038-00	14-130-305-017-00
14-130-003-011-00	14-130-166-008-01	14-130-265-039-00	14-130-305-018-00
14-130-003-013-00	14-130-166-010-00	14-130-265-040-00	14-130-305-019-00
14-130-003-014-00	14-130-166-010-00	14-130-280-001-00	14-130-305-020-00
14-130-003-015-00	14-130-166-012-00	14-130-280-003-00	14-130-305-021-00
14-130-003-017-02	14-130-166-014-00	14-130-280-004-00	14-130-305-022-00
14-130-003-018-10	14-130-166-014-50	14-130-280-005-00	14-130-305-023-00
14-130-003-019-00	14-130-166-015-00	14-130-280-006-00	14-130-305-024-00
14-130-003-020-00	14-130-166-018-00	14-130-280-007-00	14-130-305-025-00
14-130-003-020-25	14-130-166-022-01	14-130-280-008-00	14-130-305-026-00
14-130-003-020-31	14-130-185-001-01	14-130-280-009-00	14-130-305-027-00
14-130-003-020-40	14-130-185-003-00	14-130-280-010-00	14-130-305-028-00
14-130-003-020-50	14-130-185-004-00	14-130-280-011-00	14-130-305-029-00
14-130-003-020-60	14-130-185-005-00	14-130-280-012-00	14-130-305-030-00
14-130-003-020-71	14-130-185-006-00	14-130-280-013-00	14-130-305-031-00
14-130-003-020-75	14-130-185-008-00	14-130-280-014-00	14-130-305-032-00
14-130-003-021-00	14-130-185-009-00	14-130-280-015-00	14-130-305-033-00
14-130-003-022-01	14-130-185-010-00	14-130-280-016-00	14-130-004-014-00
14-130-003-022-03	14-130-185-011-00	14-130-280-017-00	14-130-166-002-00
14-130-003-022-05	14-130-185-011-50	14-130-280-018-00	14-130-166-004-00
14-130-003-020-75	14-130-185-012-00	14-130-280-019-00	14-130-280-037-00
14-130-003-023-10	14-130-185-013-01	14-130-280-020-00	14-130-280-038-00
14-130-003-023-20	14-130-185-014-00	14-130-280-021-00	14-130-280-039-00
14-130-003-023-30	14-130-185-015-00	14-130-280-022-00	14-130-280-040-00
14-130-003-023-40	14-130-185-016-00	14-130-280-023-00	14-130-280-041-00
14-130-003-023-50	14-130-185-017-00	14-130-280-024-00	14-130-280-058-00
14-130-004-001-00	14-130-185-019-00	14-130-280-025-00	14-130-280-059-00
14-130-004-002-00	14-130-185-021-00	14-130-280-026-00	14-130-280-061-00
14-130-004-003-00	14-130-185-022-00	14-130-280-027-00	14-130-280-062-00
14-130-004-004-02	14-130-185-023-00	14-130-280-028-00	14-130-280-063-00
14-130-004-006-00	14-130-185-024-00	14-130-280-029-00	14-130-280-064-00
14-130-004-007-00	14-130-185-025-00	14-130-280-030-00	14-130-280-065-00
14-130-004-008-00	14-130-185-026-00	14-130-280-031-00	14-130-280-066-00
14-130-004-009-00	14-130-185-027-00	14-130-280-032-00	14-130-280-067-00
14-130-004-010-00	14-130-190-015-00	14-130-280-033-00	14-130-280-068-00
14-130-004-011-00	14-130-190-016-02	14-130-280-034-00	14-130-280-069-00
14-130-005-012-00	14-130-190-020-00	14-130-280-035-01	14-130-280-070-00
14-130-004-013-00	14-130-190-020-50	14-130-305-034-00	14-130-280-071-00
14-130-004-015-00	14-130-190-025-00	14-130-305-035-00	14-130-280-072-00
14-130-004-016-00	14-130-190-027-00	14-130-305-036-00	14-130-295-003-01
14-130-004-017-00	14-130-190-028-00	14-130-305-037-00	14-130-295-004-00
14-130-004-022-10	14-130-190-029-00	14-130-305-038-00	14-130-295-005-00
14-130-004-022-20	14-130-190-030-00	14-130-305-116-00	14-130-185-058-00
14-130-004-023-00	14-130-190-031-00	14-130-355-001-00	14-130-185-059-00
14-130-004-024-00	14-130-190-034-05	14-130-355-004-05	14-130-185-061-00
14-130-004-027-00	14-130-190-035-00	14-130-355-005-00	14-130-185-062-00
14-130-004-030-00	14-130-190-036-00	14-130-355-006-00	14-130-185-063-00
14-130-004-031-01	14-130-190-037-00	14-130-355-007-00	14-130-185-064-00
14-130-160-001-00	14-130-190-038-00	14-130-355-008-02	14-130-185-065-00
14-130-160-002-00	14-130-190-038-50	14-130-355-012-01	14-130-185-066-00
14-130-160-003-00	14-130-245-001-00	14-130-355-013-00	14-130-185-067-01
14-130-160-004-00	14-130-245-002-00	14-130-003-016-00	14-130-185-068-01
14-130-160-005-00	14-130-245-003-00	14-130-003-022-01	14-130-185-069-00
14-130-160-007-01	14-130-245-004-00	14-130-165-031-00	14-130-185-070-00
14-130-160-008-00	14-130-245-005-00	14-130-190-032-00	14-130-185-071-01
14-130-160-008-50	14-130-245-009-00	14-130-190-033-00	14-130-185-073-01
14-130-160-009-00	14-130-245-010-00	14-130-355-003-00	14-130-185-074-00
14-130-160-010-00	14-130-245-012-00	14-130-004-012-00	14-130-185-075-00
14-130-160-011-00	14-130-245-023-00	14-130-190-023-00	14-130-185-077-00
14-130-160-012-00	14-130-245-024-00	14-130-003-023-04	14-130-190-001-00
14-130-160-013-00	14-130-245-027-00	14-130-003-020-75	14-130-190-003-00
14-130-160-014-00	14-130-245-028-00	14-130-185-052-00	14-130-190-006-00
14-130-160-015-00	14-130-245-029-00	14-130-185-053-00	14-130-190-008-00
14-130-160-016-02	14-130-245-029-50	14-130-185-054-00	14-130-185-028-00
14-130-165-001-00	14-130-245-030-00	14-130-185-055-00	14-130-185-029-00
14-130-165-002-01	14-130-245-030-50	14-130-185-056-00	14-130-185-031-00
14-130-165-003-01	14-130-245-031-00	14-130-185-057-00	14-130-185-032-00
14-130-165-004-00	14-130-245-033-00	14-130-166-005-00	14-130-185-033-00
14-130-165-005-00	14-130-245-038-00	14-130-166-007-00	14-130-185-034-00
14-130-165-006-00	14-130-245-039-00	14-130-166-009-00	14-130-185-035-00
14-130-165-007-00	14-130-245-040-00	14-130-185-007-00	14-130-185-036-00
14-130-165-008-00	14-130-245-041-01	14-130-185-020-00	14-130-185-037-00
14-130-165-009-00	14-130-245-042-00	14-130-185-047-50	14-130-185-038-00
14-130-165-010-00	14-130-245-044-00	14-130-190-002-00	14-130-185-039-00
14-130-165-011-00	14-130-260-001-00	14-130-190-012-00	14-130-185-040-00
14-130-165-012-01	14-130-260-003-00	14-130-260-021-00	14-130-190-009-00
14-130-165-014-01	14-130-260-004-00	14-130-260-027-00	14-130-190-009-50
14-130-165-015-00	14-130-260-005-01	14-130-265-009-01	14-130-190-011-00
14-130-165-017-00	14-130-260-007-05	14-130-280-002-00	14-130-190-012-01
14-130-165-018-00	14-130-260-009-00	14-130-295-001-03	14-130-190-014-00
14-130-165-019-00	14-130-260-010-01	14-130-295-006-00	14-130-295-006-00
14-130-165-021-00	14-130-260-012-00	14-130-295-010-00	14-130-295-008-00
14-130-165-022-00	14-130-260-013-00	14-130-295-016-01	14-130-295-009-00
14-130-165-023-00	14-130-260-014-00	14-130-295-018-00	14-130-295-010-00
14-130-165-025-00	14-130-260-015-01	14-130-295-019-00	14-130-295-011-00
14-130-165-026-00	14-130-260-017-02	14-130-305-001-00	14-130-295-016-01
14-130-165-027-00	14-130-260-018-01	14-130-305-002-00	14-130-295-013-00
14-130-165-028-00	14-130-260-020-00	14-130-305-003-01	14-130-295-014-00
14-130-165-029-00	14-130-260-022-01	14-130-305-004-00	14-130-295-015-00
14-130-165-030-00	14-130-260-024-00	14-130-305-005-00	14-130-185-041-00
14-130-165-032-00	14-130-260-025-00	14-130-305-006-00	14-130-185-042-02
14-130-165-033-00	14-130-260-026-00	14-130-305-007-00	14-130-185-043-01
14-130-165-034-00	14-130-260-029-00	14-130-305-008-00	14-130-185-045-01
14-130-165-035-00	14-130-260-030-00	14-130-305-009-00	14-130-185-048-00
14-130-165-036-00	14-130-260-031-01	14-130-305-010-00	14-130-185-049-00
14-130-165-037-00	14-130-260-032-02	14-130-305-011-00	14-130-185-050-00
14-130-165-038-00	14-130-265-001-11	14-130-305-012-00	14-130-185-028-00
14-130-165-039-00	14-130-260-027-00	14-130-305-013-00	14-130-003-024-00
14-130-166-001-00	14-130-265-003-00	14-130-305-014-00	14-130-185-026-00
14-130-166-003-00	14-130-265-006-00	14-130-305-015-00	
14-130-166-004-00	14-130-265-036-00	14-130-305-016-00	

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that the Township Board has received plans showing the proposed aquatic plant control project, associated activities, any proposed improvements and locations thereof, together with an estimate of the cost of the project. The Township Board has passed a resolution tentatively declaring its intention to undertake such project and to create the afore-described special assessment district.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that the Township Board has placed the project plans and costs estimates on file with the Township Clerk and said plans, cost estimates and special assessment district may be examined at the Clerk's office from the date of this Notice to the date of the public hearing and may further be examined at such public hearing.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that the Township Board proposes to make a perparcel/per house special assessment each year for a period of five years (2026-2031 inclusive) in an amount to be determined periodically, which amount will be based on the scope of work planned for that year. The annual assessment is proposed to range between $25.00 to $75.00 per house. Additionally, the Township Board reserves the right to not levy an assessment or to levy a lesser assessment amount in any year that there are more funds in the special assessment fund than the amount needed for that year's aquatic plant control work and associated activities. The Township Board proposes to annually assess benefited properties for the costs of the aquatic plant control project (with associated activities), with only published notice each year, unless the amount to be specially assessed increases by more than 10% in any one year. If the amount to be specially assessed increases by more than 10% in any one year, then mailed notices of the public hearing on the reassessment would be provided to owners of record of property to be specially assessed.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that a public hearing on the plans, district, and cost estimates for the 2026-2031 Magician Lake Aquatic Weed Control Special Assessment will be held at the Silver Creek Township Hall at 32764 Dixon Street, Dowagiac, MI commencing at 6:30 p.m. on July 8, 2026.

At the hearing, the Board will consider any written objections and comments to any of the foregoing matters which are filed with the clerk at or before the hearing, and any objections or comments raised at the hearing; and at the hearing (or any adjournment of the hearing which may be made without further notice), the township board may revise, correct, amend or change the plans, cost estimates or special assessment district.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that if written objections to the project are filed with the Township Board at or before the hearing, signed by the record owners of land constituting more than 20% of the area within the proposed special assessment district, then the township board may not proceed unless petitions in support of the project, signed by record owners of more than 50% of the area to be made into a special assessment district, are filed with the township. Written comments or objections may be filed with the clerk at the address set out below.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that appearance and protest at the public hearing is required in order to appeal the amount of the special assessment to the State Tax Tribunal within 30 days after the special assessment roll is confirmed.

An owner or party in interest, or his or her agent, may appear in person at the hearing to protest the special assessment, or shall be permitted to file at or before the hearing his or her appearance or protest by letter and his or her personal appearance shall not be required. All interested persons are invited to be present in person or by representative and to submit comments concerning the establishment of the special assessment district, the plans, and cost estimates.

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that if the township board determines to proceed with the special assessments, it will cause a special assessment roll to be prepared and another hearing will be held, after notice to record owners of property proposed to be specially assessed, to hear public comments concerning the proposed special assessments.

Silver Creek Township will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services, such as signers for the hearing impaired and audio tapes of printed material being considered at the hearing, to individuals with disabilities at the hearing upon four (4) days' notice to the Silver Creek Township Clerk. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact the Silver Creek Township Clerk.

Jess Honn, Clerk
Silver Creek Township
32764 Dixon Street
P.O. Box 464
Dowagiac, MI 49047
269-424-3025
www.silvercreektwpmi.gov

NOTICE OF ELECTION, REGISTRATION FOR THE PRIMARY ELECTION & PUBLIC ACCURACY TEST TO BE HELD ON TUESDAY, AUGUST 4, 2026 JEFFERSON, CALVIN, LAGRANGE, PENN, & WAYNE TOWNSHIPS CASS COUNTY, MICHIGAN

TO THE QUALIFIED ELECTORS OF JEFFERSON, CALVIN, LAGRANGE, PENN, & WAYNE TOWNSHIP:
PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that any qualified elector of Jefferson, Calvin, LaGrange, Penn, & Wayne Townships who is not already registered, may register to vote at the office of the Township Clerk; the office of the County Clerk; a Secretary of State branch office; or other designated state agency. Registration forms can be obtained at mi.gov/vote and mailed to the Township Clerk. Voters who are already registered may update their registration at www.expressSOS.com.
The last day to register in any manner other than in-person with the local clerk is **Monday, July 20, 2026.** After this date, anyone who qualifies as an elector may register to vote in person with proof of residency (MCL 168.497) at the Township Clerk's office, located at and during the following times:

Jefferson Township
24725 Jefferson Center St.
Cassopolis, MI 49031
(269) 445-3941 ext. 7
By appointment
Sat, Aug. 1st 7:30am-11:30am
Sun, Aug. 2nd 1pm-5pm

Calvin Township
18693 Mt. Zion St.
Cassopolis, MI 49031
(269) 476-2620
Thursday evenings by appointment
Sun, Aug. 2nd 8am-4pm

LaGrange Township
Central Cass Fire Department
23201 M-60, Cassopolis, MI 49031
(269) 233-4004
By appointment
Saturday, Aug. 1st 12:30pm-5:30pm
Sun, Aug. 2nd 11am-2pm

Penn Township
Cassopolis VFW
131 S. Broadway
Cassopolis, MI 49031
(269) 816-5165
By appointment
Sat. Aug. 1st 8am-4pm

Wayne Township
53950 Glenwood Rd
Dowagiac, MI 49047
(269) 782-7017
By appointment
Sat, Aug. 1st. 8am-4pm

And Election Day, Tuesday, August 4th from 7:00 am-8:00 pm at the Jefferson, Calvin, LaGrange, Penn, and Wayne Township Clerk's Offices.
PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that Jefferson, Calvin, LaGrange, Penn, and Wayne Township electors will be voting on the following offices:
Governor, United States Senator, Representative in Congress - 5th District, State Senator - 17th District, Representative in State Legislature - 36th or 37th District, Precinct Delegate
PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that Calvin, Jefferson, LaGrange, Penn, and Wayne Township electors will be voting on the following ballot proposal:
CASS COUNTY
911 Central Dispatch Renewal Millage Proposal
Renewal not to exceed .1962 mill ($0.1962 per each $1,000 pf taxable value) on all taxable property in the County of Cass for the purpose of funding the costs for the operation of the 911 Central Dispatch.
PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that Jefferson Township electors will be voting on the following ballot proposals:
Jefferson Township Renewal of Road Millage:
Road millage not to exceed 1 mill ($1.00 on each $1,000 of taxable value) for a period of four (4) years beginning in the year 2027.
Edwardsburg Public Schools Operation Millage Renewal:
Renewal of current operating millage not to exceed 19 mills ($19.00 on each $1,000 of taxable value) on all property except principal residence and other property exempted by law for a period of 4 years beginning in 2027.
Full text of the ballot propositions may be obtained at the administrative offices of Edwardsburg Public Schools, 69410 Section Street, Edwardsburg, MI, 49112-9668, telephone: (269) 663-3055.
A sample ballot may be viewed at mi.gov/vote.
ABSENTEE BALLOTS ARE AVAILABLE FOR ALL ELECTIONS; REGISTERED VOTERS MAY CONTACT THE TOWNSHIP CLERK TO OBTAIN AN APPLICATION FOR AN ABSENT VOTER BALLOT BY CALLING THE TOWNSHIP OFFICES.
TO THE QUALIFIED ELECTORS OF JEFFERSON, CALVIN, LAGRANGE, PENN, & WAYNE TOWNSHIPS, CASS COUNTY, MICHIGAN:
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a Public Accuracy Test for the August 4, 2026, Primary Election will be conducted for the above Townships on the following dates and locations:

LaGrange Township
LaGrange Township Hall
58253 M-62 Cassopolis, MI
July 20, 2026 at noon

Penn Township
Penn Township Hall
60717 S. Main St. Vandalia, MI
July 22, 2026 at 6:30pm

Calvin Township
William J Robinson Community Building
18693 Mt. Zion Rd. Cassopolis, MI
July 10, 2026, at 4pm

Jefferson Township
Jefferson Township Hall
24725 Jefferson Center St.
Cassopolis, MI
July 22, 2026, at 8am

Wayne Township
53950 Glenwood Rd
Dowagiac, MI 49047
July 21, 2026, at 1pm

The Public Accuracy Test is conducted to demonstrate that the program and computer used to tabulate the results of the August 4, 2026, Primary Election have been prepared in accordance with the law.
Persons with disabilities needing accommodation should contact the clerk's office.

Valerie Locke	Rhonda Barnett	Tasha E. McCoy	Michelle Anderson	Michelle Smith
Jefferson Twp Clerk	Penn Twp Clerk,	LaGrange Twp Clerk	Calvin Twp Clerk	Wayne Twp Clerk
(269) 445-3941 x 7	(269) 816-5165	(269) 233-4004	(269) 476-2620	(269) 782-7017

Penn Township, Cass County, Michigan
TO: PROPERTY OWNERS OF ALL PROPERTIES THAT BORDER DONNELL LAKE AND BACK LOTS WITH DEEDED OR DEDICATED ACCESS TO THE LAKE IN PENN TOWNSHIP, AND ANY OTHER INTERESTED RESIDENTS AND PROPERTY OWNERS:
PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Penn Township Board proposes to implement an improvement project for Donnell Lake that includes aquatic plant control, lake management consulting, and administration and contingency, and to create a special assessment district for the recovery of the cost thereof by special assessment against the properties benefited therein.
PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that said special assessment district is proposed to include all properties that border the lake and back lots with deeded or dedicated access to the lake. Properties in said special assessment district are more specifically described as follows:

14-100-035-001-01	14-100-280-036-00	14-100-290-018-00	14-100-321-003-01	14-100-360-040-00
14-100-035-001-10	14-100-280-037-00	14-100-290-019-01	14-100-321-004-01	14-100-360-042-00
14-100-035-002-00	14-100-280-038-00	14-100-290-020-50	14-100-321-006-00	14-100-360-044-00
14-100-035-003-00	14-100-280-039-00	14-100-290-021-00	14-100-321-007-00	14-100-360-047-00
14-100-035-004-00	14-100-280-040-00	14-100-290-025-10	14-100-321-008-00	14-100-360-048-00
14-100-035-005-00	14-100-280-041-01	14-100-290-033-00	14-100-340-002-00	14-100-360-049-00
14-100-035-006-00	14-100-280-045-00	14-100-300-001-00	14-100-340-004-01	14-100-360-051-00
14-100-035-007-00	14-100-280-046-05	14-100-300-003-10	14-100-340-004-51	14-100-360-052-01
14-100-035-008-00	14-100-280-047-00	14-100-300-003-20	14-100-340-006-00	14-100-360-054-00
14-100-035-009-00	14-100-280-049-00	14-100-300-004-01	14-100-340-007-00	14-100-360-055-00
14-100-035-017-00	14-100-280-053-00	14-100-300-004-10	14-100-340-008-01	14-100-370-056-00
14-100-036-042-01	14-100-280-054-00	14-100-300-004-20	14-100-340-009-01	14-100-370-057-01
14-100-036-044-00	14-100-280-056-00	14-100-300-005-00	14-100-340-010-00	14-100-370-059-00
14-100-036-045-00	14-100-280-057-02	14-100-300-006-00	14-100-340-011-00	14-100-370-060-00
14-100-036-045-50	14-100-280-058-00	14-100-300-007-00	14-100-340-011-50	14-100-370-061-00
14-100-260-001-00	14-100-280-059-00	14-100-300-008-00	14-100-340-013-00	14-100-370-063-00
14-100-260-002-00	14-100-280-060-00	14-100-300-009-00	14-100-340-014-00	14-100-370-064-00
14-100-260-003-00	14-100-280-061-00	14-100-300-010-01	14-100-340-015-00	14-100-370-065-01
14-100-260-004-00	14-100-280-062-02	14-100-300-011-00	14-100-340-016-01	14-100-370-067-00
14-100-260-005-00	14-100-280-063-01	14-100-300-012-00	14-100-340-018-00	14-100-370-069-00
14-100-260-007-00	14-100-280-064-01	14-100-300-013-00	14-100-340-019-00	14-100-370-071-00
14-100-260-008-00	14-100-280-066-00	14-100-300-014-00	14-100-340-020-00	14-100-370-073-00
14-100-260-010-00	14-100-280-067-01	14-100-300-018-01	14-100-340-021-01	14-100-370-075-01
14-100-260-011-00	14-100-280-069-01	14-100-300-020-02	14-100-340-024-00	14-100-370-078-00
14-100-260-012-00	14-100-280-070-01	14-100-300-024-00	14-100-340-025-00	14-100-370-086-00
14-100-260-013-00	14-100-280-072-00	14-100-300-025-00	14-100-340-026-00	14-100-370-088-00
14-100-260-014-00	14-100-280-073-00	14-100-300-026-00	14-100-340-027-00	14-100-370-090-00
14-100-260-015-00	14-100-280-074-00	14-100-300-027-00	14-100-340-028-00	14-100-380-001-00
14-100-260-016-00	14-100-280-076-00	14-100-300-029-00	14-100-340-029-00	14-100-380-002-00
14-100-260-017-00	14-100-280-077-00	14-100-300-030-00	14-100-340-030-00	14-100-380-003-00
14-100-260-018-00	14-100-280-078-00	14-100-300-030-51	14-100-340-031-00	14-100-380-004-00
14-100-260-019-00	14-100-280-079-00	14-100-300-031-00	14-100-340-032-00	14-100-380-005-00
14-100-260-020-00	14-100-280-081-00	14-100-300-032-01	14-100-340-033-00	14-100-380-006-00
14-100-260-021-00	14-100-280-082-00	14-100-300-035-00	14-100-340-034-00	14-100-380-007-00
14-100-260-022-00	14-100-280-083-00	14-100-300-036-00	14-100-360-001-00	14-100-380-008-00
14-100-260-023-00	14-100-280-084-00	14-100-300-037-00	14-100-360-002-00	14-100-380-009-00
14-100-260-025-00	14-100-280-085-03	14-100-310-001-00	14-100-360-003-00	14-100-380-010-10
14-100-260-026-00	14-100-280-087-02	14-100-310-003-04	14-100-360-004-00	14-100-380-011-00
14-100-280-001-00	14-100-280-089-00	14-100-310-006-50	14-100-360-006-00	14-100-380-012-01
14-100-280-002-00	14-100-280-090-01	14-100-310-008-01	14-100-360-008-00	14-100-380-015-00
14-100-280-003-00	14-100-280-092-00	14-100-310-010-00	14-100-360-009-00	14-100-380-016-01
14-100-280-004-00	14-100-280-093-01	14-100-310-011-00	14-100-360-011-00	14-100-380-018-00
14-100-280-005-00	14-100-280-094-00	14-100-310-012-00	14-100-360-012-00	14-100-380-019-00
14-100-280-006-00	14-100-280-095-00	14-100-310-014-00	14-100-360-013-00	14-100-380-020-00
14-100-280-007-00	14-100-280-096-00	14-100-310-015-00	14-100-360-014-00	14-100-380-024-01
14-100-280-008-00	14-100-280-097-00	14-100-310-016-00	14-100-360-015-00	14-100-380-025-00
14-100-280-009-00	14-100-280-099-00	14-100-310-017-00	14-100-360-016-00	14-100-380-026-00
14-100-280-010-00	14-100-280-100-00	14-100-310-019-01	14-100-360-017-00	14-100-380-028-01
14-100-280-011-00	14-100-280-101-00	14-100-310-021-01	14-100-360-018-00	14-100-390-093-00
14-100-280-012-00	14-100-280-114-02	14-100-310-022-00	14-100-360-019-00	14-100-390-095-01
14-100-280-013-00	14-100-280-136-00	14-100-320-001-00	14-100-360-020-00	14-100-390-096-00
14-100-280-014-00	14-100-280-139-00	14-100-320-003-01	14-100-360-021-00	14-100-390-097-02
14-100-280-015-00	14-100-290-001-01	14-100-320-004-00	14-100-360-022-01	14-100-390-099-01
14-100-280-016-00	14-100-290-001-51	14-100-320-005-00	14-100-360-023-01	14-100-390-101-01
14-100-280-017-00	14-100-290-002-00	14-100-320-006-00	14-100-360-024-00	14-100-390-104-01
14-100-280-018-00	14-100-290-003-00	14-100-320-007-00	14-100-360-025-00	14-100-400-003-00
14-100-280-019-00	14-100-290-004-00	14-100-320-008-00	14-100-360-027-00	14-100-400-004-00
14-100-280-020-00	14-100-290-005-00	14-100-320-008-50	14-100-360-028-00	14-100-400-005-01
14-100-280-021-00	14-100-290-006-00	14-100-320-009-00	14-100-360-029-00	14-100-400-006-01
14-100-280-022-00	14-100-290-007-00	14-100-320-011-01	14-100-360-030-00	14-100-400-007-00
14-100-280-023-00	14-100-290-008-00	14-100-320-012-00	14-100-360-031-01	14-100-400-008-00
14-100-280-024-00	14-100-290-010-00	14-100-320-013-00	14-100-360-032-00	14-100-400-009-00
14-100-280-025-00	14-100-290-011-00	14-100-320-014-00	14-100-360-033-00	14-100-430-001-02
14-100-280-026-00	14-100-290-012-00	14-100-320-015-01	14-100-360-034-00	14-100-430-003-00
14-100-280-028-00	14-100-290-013-00	14-100-320-016-00	14-100-360-035-01	14-100-430-004-00
14-100-280-031-00	14-100-290-014-00	14-100-320-017-00	14-100-360-036-00	14-100-430-005-00
14-100-280-032-00	14-100-290-015-00	14-100-320-024-00	14-100-360-037-00	14-100-430-006-00
14-100-280-034-00	14-100-290-016-10	14-100-321-001-00	14-100-360-038-00	14-100-430-007-00
14-100-280-035-00	14-100-290-017-00	14-100-321-002-00	14-100-360-039-00	

PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that the Township Board has received plans showing the improvements together with an estimate of the costs of such improvements in the approximate amount of $19,320 per year for five years (2027 to 2031), has placed the same on file with the Township Clerk, and has passed a Resolution tentatively declaring its intention to make such improvements and to create the aforementioned special assessment district.
PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that said plans and special assessment district may be examined at the office of the Township Clerk from the date of this notice until and including the date of the public hearing hereon and may further be examined at such public hearing.
PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that a public hearing upon such plans, district, and estimate of costs will be held at Penn Township Hall, 60717 S. Main Street, Vandalia, Michigan, commencing at 6:30 pm on Monday, July 13, 2026.
PLEASE TAKE FURTHER NOTICE that if written objections to the improvement are filed with the Township Board, at or before the hearing, signed by record owners of land constituting more than 20% of the land area in the proposed special assessment district, then the Township Board may not proceed unless it determines that Petitions in support of the project, signed by record owners of more than 50% of the land area to be made into a special assessment district, have been filed with the Township. Property shall not be added to the proposed special assessment district and the original estimate of cost shall not be increased by more than

2000 PROFESSIONAL SERVICE DIRECTORY

SLIM'S CONSTRUCTION

WE SPECIALIZE IN POLE BARNS ROOFING & CONCRETE

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65280 M-66
Sturgis, MI 49091

SAM SCHWARTZ 269-221-0159

White Space Sells

NOTICE TO CREDITORS TO ALL CREDITORS: The Decedent, Charles R. Sprague, whose last known address was 33809 Silver Street, Dowagiac, MI 49047, died May 27, 2026. There is no Personal Representative of the Decedent's Estate to whom letters of administration have been issued. Creditors of the Decedent are notified that all claims against the Decedent's estate will be forever barred unless presented to DAVID C. SPRAGUE, Trustee of THE CHARLES R. SPRAGUE AND MARGARET E. SPRAGUE TRUST DATED OCTOBER 19, 2010, within four months after the date of this publication. Notice is further given that the Trust will thereafter be assigned and distributed to the persons entitled to it. Dated: June 22, 2026 DAVID C. SPRAGUE, Trustee of THE CHARLES R. SPRAGUE AND MARGARET E. SPRAGUE TRUST DATED OCTOBER 19, 2010 9678 Columbia Rd. Dowagiac, MI 49047 Attorney for Trustee: Andrew W. Barnes (P70571) Butzel Long, P.C. 317 Center Street South Haven, MI 49090 (269) 287-2010 (07-04)

PUBLIC NOTICE
BERTRAND CHARTER TOWNSHIP
COUNTY OF BERRIEN, STATE OF MICHIGAN

PUBLIC ACCURACY TEST

TO THE QUALIFIED ELECTORS OF BERTRAND CHARTER TOWNSHIP, BERRIEN COUNTY, MICHIGAN:

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Public Accuracy Test for the electronic equipment that will be used for the **August 4, 2026 State Primary Election** has been scheduled for:

Tuesday, July 14, at 9 a.m.
Bertrand Township Hall
3835 Buffalo Road
Buchanan, MI 49107

The Public Accuracy Test is conducted to demonstrate that the computer programming used to tabulate the votes cast at the election meets the requirements of Michigan Election Law.

Sheryl Miller
Bertrand Charter Township Clerk

Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
Notice of foreclosure by advertisement. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Cass County, starting promptly at 10:00 AM on JULY 15, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information.
Default has been made in the conditions of a mortgage made by Danny Banks II, to Fifth Third Mortgage - MI, LLC, Mortgagee, dated September 26, 2008 and recorded October 8, 2008 in Liber 984, Page 501 Cass County Records, Michigan. Said mortgage is now held by Fifth Third Bank, National Association as successor by merger to Fifth Third Mortgage Company, by assignment. There is claimed to be due at the date hereof the sum of Seventy-Two Thousand Thirty-Eight and 81/100 Dollars ($72,038.81).
Under the power of sale contained in said mortgage and the statute in such case made and provided, notice is hereby given that said mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at public venue at the place of holding the circuit court within Cass County, Michigan at 10:00 AM on JULY 15, 2026.
Said premises are located in the Township of Ontwa, Cass County Michigan, and are described as:
Lot Number 93, the North Half of Lot 92, and the South half of Lot 94, Redfield Woods No. 2, according to the plat thereof as recorded in Liber I of Plats, page 434, Cass County Records.
70862 Sherman Rd, Edwardsburg, Michigan 49112
The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCLA §600.3241a, in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of such sale.
If the property is sold at foreclosure sale, pursuant to MCL 600.3278, the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damage to the property during the redemption period. FinCEN reporting will be required of all successful purchasers, absent a lawful exemption.
Dated: June 13, 2026
File No. 26-004938
Firm Name: Orlans Law Group PLLC
Firm Address: 1650 West Big Beaver Road, Troy MI 48084
Firm Phone Number: (248) 502.1400 (06-13)(07-04)

SELL YOUR ITEMS IN THE CLASSIFIEDS TODAY!

...BECAUSE MONEY DOESN'T GROW ON TREES!

THIS FIRM IS A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT. ANY INFORMATION OBTAINED WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE.

NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE BY ADVERTISEMENT

Default having been made in the conditions of a certain Mortgage made by MALINDA L. SPEICHER, a single woman, residing at 368 East Main Street, Marcellus, MI 49067 to OAK MORTGAGE, LLC. (n/k/a STURGIS BANK & TRUST COMPANY), 125 E. Chicago Road, Sturgis, Michigan 49091 dated August 6, 2021, and recorded in the office of the Register of Deeds for the County of Cass and State of Michigan, on August 18, 2021, in Liber 1201 of Mortgages, on page 1648. There is claimed to be due on the date of this notice, for principal and interest the sum of One Hundred Sixteen Thousand Sixty-Seven and 23/100 ($116,267.23) Dollars due on the mortgage and no proceedings having been instituted to recover the debt now remaining secured by said Mortgage, or any part thereof, whereby the power of sale contained in said Mortgage has become operative;

Now Therefore, Notice is Given that by virtue of the power of sale contained in said Mortgages and under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, the said Mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises therein described or so much thereof as may be necessary, at a public auction sale, to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check, at the West outer door of the Courthouse in the City of Cassopolis and County of Cass, Michigan, that being the place of holding Circuit Court in and for said County, on July 15, 2026, at promptly 10:00 o'clock in the forenoon of said day; which said mortgage premises are described as follows, to-wit: Lot 3, Block 1 South, Range 3 East, Village of Marcellus, according to the recorded plat in Liber 41 of Plats, Page 138, Cass County Records.

Property Address: 368 East Main Street, Marcellus, MI 49067 PIN: 14-051-551-003-00

Said premises will be sold to pay the amount as aforesaid then due on said Mortgage together with 2.875% percent interest on the Mortgage, legal costs, attorneys' fees and also any taxes and insurance that said Mortgagee does pay on or prior to the date of said sale. The amount due on said Mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information.

Pursuant to MCL 600.3240, the last day to redeem the Sheriff's Deed will be January 15, 2027, however, if an Affidavit of Abandonment is filed with the Register of Deeds, the last day to redeem will be August 15, 2026, or until the time to provide the notice was required by MCL 600.3241a(c) expires, whichever is later.

If said property is in fact sold at the above-described foreclosure sale, pursuant to MCL 600.3278, the above listed Mortgagor will be responsible to the person who buys the property at the foreclosure sale or to STURGIS BANK & TRUST COMPANY for damaging the property during the redemption period.

ATTENTION HOMEOWNER: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this Notice.

ATTENTION PURCHASERS: This sale may be rescinded by the foreclosing mortgagee. In that event, your damages, if any, shall be limited solely to the return of the bid amount tendered at sale, plus interest.

Dated: June 20, 2026 STURGIS BANK & TRUST
Mortgagee.

HaasCaywood PC
By: P. Joseph Haas, Jr.
Attorney for STURGIS BANK & TRUST
Business Address: 112 South Monroe Street
Sturgis, MI 49091
(269) 651-3281

Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement
Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Cass County, starting promptly at 10:00 AM, on July 15, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information:
Name(s) of the mortgagor(s): Otis D Kirby and Krystle R Willming, joint tenants with full rights of survivorship
Original Mortgagee: Honor Credit Union
Foreclosing Assignee (if any): None
Date of Mortgage: August 3, 2018
Date of Mortgage Recording: August 6, 2018
Amount claimed due on date of notice: $98,940.19
Description of the mortgaged premises: Situated in Township of Pokagon, Cass County, Michigan, and described as: Commencing at a point which is 24.64 rods South of a point which is 56.20 rods South 45 3/4 West from the most Westerly corner of Tuthill's Addition to the City of Dowagiac, as recorded in Liber 1 of Plats, Page 46, Cass County Records; thence South 64 degrees West 7.96 rods; thence South to the East and West Quarter line of Section 2, Town 6 South, Range 16 West, thence East along said Quarter line 7.055 rods; thence North to the place of beginning.
Common street address (if any): 29170 Pokagon St, Dowagiac, MI 49047-7703
The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241a; or, if the subject real property is used for agricultural purposes as defined by MCL 600.3240(16).
If the property is sold at foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to MCL 600.3278 the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period.
Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
This notice is from a debt collector.
Date of notice: June 13, 2026
Trott Law, P.C.
31440 Northwestern Hwy, Suite 145
Farmington Hills, MI 48334
(248) 642-2515 1595721 (06-13)(07-04)

NOTICE OF FORECLOSURE BY ADVERTISEMENT. Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in CASS County, starting promptly at 10:00 AM, on July 22, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of the sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information. MORTGAGE INFORMATION: Default has been made in the conditions of a certain mortgage made by Jamal B. Smith, whose address is 33602 Sassafras Lane, Eau Claire, Michigan 49111, as original Mortgagors, to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as mortgagee, as nominee for Carrington Mortgage Services, LLC, being a mortgage dated October 20, 2023, and recorded on November 2, 2023 in Liber 1239 Page 389, Cass County Records, State of Michigan and then assigned to SAIF Securitization Trust 2024-CES1, as assignee as documented by an assignment dated June 1, 2026 and recorded on June 8, 2026 in Liber 1277 Page 1443, Cass County Records, Michigan, on which mortgage there is claimed to be due at the date hereof the sum of FORTY THOUSAND FOUR HUNDRED SIXTY-ONE AND 69/100 DOLLARS ($40,461.69). Said premises are situated in the Township of Silver Creek, County of Cass, State of Michigan, and are described as: Unit 19 in Indian Lake Woods Condominium, according to the Master Deed thereof, as recorded in Liber 847, Page 137, Cass County Records, and any amendments thereto and designated as Cass County Condominium Subdivision Plan No. 12, together with rights in general common elements and limited common elements as set forth in said Master Deed and as described in Act 59 of the Public Acts of 1978, as amended. Street Address: 33602 Sassafras Lane, Eau Claire, Michigan 49111 The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless the property is determined abandoned in accordance with MCLA § 600.3241a in which case the redemption period shall be 30 days from the date of the sale. If the property is sold at a foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to MCLA § 600.3278, the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period. THIS FIRM IS A DEBT COLLECTOR ATTEMPTING TO COLLECT A DEBT AND ANY INFORMATION WE OBTAIN WILL BE USED FOR THAT PURPOSE. ATTENTION HOMEOWNER: IF YOU ARE A MILITARY SERVICE MEMBER ON ACTIVE DUTY, IF YOUR PERIOD OF ACTIVE DUTY HAS CONCLUDED LESS THAN 90 DAYS AGO, OR IF YOU HAVE BEEN ORDERED TO ACTIVE DUTY, PLEASE CONTACT THE ATTORNEY FOR THE PARTY FORECLOSING THE MORTGAGE AT THE TELEPHONE NUMBER STATED IN THIS NOTICE. Dated: June 20, 2026 For more information, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing: Robert A. Blumberg (P87490) Johnson, Blumberg & Associates LLC 30 North LaSalle St., Suite 3650 Chicago, Illinois, 60602 312.541.9710 - Phone 312.541.9711 - Fax File No.: MI 26 7212 (06-20)(07-11)

Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement
Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Cass County, starting promptly at 10:00 AM, on August 5, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information:
Name(s) of the mortgagor(s): Frank J. Coussens, III, a single man
Original Mortgagee: JPMorgan Chase Bank, National Association
Foreclosing Assignee (if any): None
Date of Mortgage: August 24, 2018
Date of Mortgage Recording: September 10, 2018
Amount claimed due on date of notice: $86,087.70
Description of the mortgaged premises: Situated in Township of Ontwa, Cass County, Michigan, and described as: Lots 46, 47 and 48, Eagle Park, according to the plat thereof recorded in Liber 1 of Plats, Page 98, Cass County Records.
Common street address (if any): 68776 West St, Edwardsburg, MI 49112-9585
The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241a; or, if the subject real property is used for agricultural purposes as defined by MCL 600.3240(16).
If the property is sold at foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to MCL 600.3278 the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period.
Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
This notice is from a debt collector.
Date of notice: June 13, 2026
Trott Law, P.C.
31440 Northwestern Hwy, Suite 145
Farmington Hills, MI 48334
(248) 642-2515
1595615 (06-13)(07-04)

Notice of Foreclosure by Advertisement
Notice is given under section 3212 of the revised judicature act of 1961, 1961 PA 236, MCL 600.3212, that the following mortgage will be foreclosed by a sale of the mortgaged premises, or some part of them, at a public auction sale to the highest bidder for cash or cashier's check at the place of holding the circuit court in Cass County, starting promptly at 10:00 AM, on July 15, 2026. The amount due on the mortgage may be greater on the day of sale. Placing the highest bid at the sale does not automatically entitle the purchaser to free and clear ownership of the property. A potential purchaser is encouraged to contact the county register of deeds office or a title insurance company, either of which may charge a fee for this information:
Name(s) of the mortgagor(s): Kyon Woodward, unmarried woman
Original Mortgagee: Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc., as mortgagee, as nominee for lender and lender's successors and/or assigns
Foreclosing Assignee (if any): PennyMac Loan Services, LLC
Date of Mortgage: June 5, 2024
Date of Mortgage Recording: July 17, 2024
Amount claimed due on date of notice: $64,643.93
Description of the mortgaged premises: Situated in City of Dowagiac, Cass County, Michigan, and described as: Lot 7, Hoyt and Gardner's Addition to the City of Dowagiac, according to the recorded plat thereof as recorded in Liber 1 of Plats, Page 13, Cass County Records.
Common street address (if any): 210 S Lowe St, Dowagiac, MI 49047-1639
The redemption period shall be 6 months from the date of such sale, unless determined abandoned in accordance with MCL 600.3241a; or, if the subject real property is used for agricultural purposes as defined by MCL 600.3240(16).
If the property is sold at foreclosure sale under Chapter 32 of the Revised Judicature Act of 1961, pursuant to MCL 600.3278 the borrower will be held responsible to the person who buys the property at the mortgage foreclosure sale or to the mortgage holder for damaging the property during the redemption period.
Attention homeowner: If you are a military service member on active duty, if your period of active duty has concluded less than 90 days ago, or if you have been ordered to active duty, please contact the attorney for the party foreclosing the mortgage at the telephone number stated in this notice.
This notice is from a debt collector.
Date of notice: June 13, 2026
Trott Law, P.C.
31440 Northwestern Hwy, Suite 145
Farmington Hills, MI 48334
(248) 642-2515
1595361 (06-13)(07-04)

NOTICE OF REGISTRATION AND ELECTION
BERTRAND CHARTER TOWNSHIP, BERRIEN COUNTY, MICHIGAN
STATE PRIMARY ELECTION
TO BE HELD TUESDAY, AUGUST 4, 2026

To the qualified electors of Bertrand Charter Township:

NOTICE OF REGISTRATION
Please take notice that any qualified elector of Bertrand Charter Township who is not already registered may register to vote at the office of the Bertrand Charter Township Clerk, the office of the Berrien County Clerk, a Secretary of State branch office, or another designated state agency. Registration forms may be obtained at the Bertrand Charter Township Clerk's Office or at mi.gov/vote and mailed to the Bertrand Charter Township Clerk. Voters who are already registered may update their registration with their local clerk or at www.expressSOS.com.

The last day to register in any manner other than in person with the local clerk is **Monday, July 20, 2026**. After this date, anyone who qualifies as an elector may register to vote in person with proof of residency, as provided by MCL 168.492, at the Bertrand Charter Township Clerk's Office, **3835 Buffalo Road, Buchanan, MI 49107**, through 8:00 p.m. on Election Day.

The Bertrand Charter Township Clerk will be available to receive voter registrations on Election Day, **Tuesday, August 4, 2026**, from **7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m**.

ELECTION DAY
Notice is hereby given that a State Primary Election will be held in Bertrand Charter Township, Berrien County, Michigan, on **Tuesday, August 4, 2026.**

The polls will be open from **7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.**

The Bertrand Charter Township polling location is as follows:
Precinct 1
Bertrand Township Hall
3835 Buffalo Road
Buchanan, MI 49107

The election will be held for the purpose of nominating candidates for Governor, United States Senator, Representative in Congress, State Senator, State Representative, county and local offices, and to elect Precinct Delegates.

The full text of any ballots may be obtained at the Bertrand Charter Township Clerk's Office, 3835 Buffalo Road, Buchanan, MI 49107, and may also be available through the Michigan Voter Information Center at mi.gov/vote. Sample ballots may be viewed at mi.gov/vote.

EARLY VOTING
During Early Voting, **Saturday, July 25, 2026, through Sunday, August 2, 2026**, polls for Bertrand Charter Township electors will be located at:
Lake Charter Township Hall
3220 W. Shawnee Road
Bridgman, MI 49106

Early voting hours will be as follows:
July 25: 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
July 26: 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
July 27: 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
July 28: 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
July 29: 11:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.
July 30: 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
July 31: 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
August 1: 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
August 2: 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Absentee ballots are available for all elections. Registered voters may contact the Bertrand Charter Township Clerk to obtain an application for an absent voter ballot.

To comply with the Help America Vote Act, voting instructions will be available in audio format and in Braille. Arrangements for obtaining instructions in these alternative formats may be made by contacting the Township Clerk in advance of the election. All polling locations are accessible for voters with disabilities.

Persons with special needs, as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act, should contact the Bertrand Charter Township Clerk's Office.

Sheryl Miller
Bertrand Charter Township Clerk
3835 Buffalo Road
Buchanan, MI 49107
Phone: 269-695-5001
Email: clerk@bertrandtownship.com

OUTDOORS

Submitting hunting or fishing photos

Have a behemoth buck, a tremendous turkey or super-sized salmon? Please submit photos to sports@TheHP.com.

Your photo must be in focus, all persons in the photo must be identified, and the general location of the hunt must be provided (for example, 10-point buck shot in Benton Township, black bear shot near Munising, Mich., etc.)

Northern bobwhites seen in Hickory Creek Manor, St. Joseph Township

Over the course of the last two spring seasons, I have received multiple photos of northern bobwhites, all taken within the Hickory Creek Manor subdivision in St. Joseph Township.

On June 17, Robin Gvozsich submitted a photo of a pair of Northern bobwhites, which I have included in this week's column. I believe all of the bobwhites recently observed in Hickory Creek Manor were released by (an) individual(s), and do not represent a wild, self-sustaining population. One reason being, bobwhites do not thrive in the suburban landscape. I highly suspect someone is releasing these birds.

Jonathan Wuepper
Southwest Michigan Wildlife

Photo provided / Robin Gvozsich

Pair of northern bobwhites, June 17, St. Joseph Twp.

The northern bobwhite prefers grasslands, interspersed with brushy areas. Brushy areas and crop rows help bobwhites escape from predators. The species is native to southern Michigan, originally found in the oak-savannah landscape of southern Berrien and Cass Counties. When the pioneers arrived and cleared the forests, bobwhites thrived. Historically, Michigan bobwhite populations would dwindle after harsh winters, but would rebound after at least two consecutive mild winters.

In the 20th Century, particularly after World War II, farming practices modernized. Fence-row clearing eliminated sheltered areas for bobwhites and other birds and mammals. Pesticides and herbicides reduced food and cover for the bobwhite.

Christmas Bird Census records show that the bobwhite was abundant in Southwest Michigan up until the late 1970s. Then came the harsh winters of 1976-1978, causing bobwhite numbers to plummet – and they never recovered.

By 2010, the Michigan Bird Records Committee declared the northern bobwhite extirpated from Michigan. Meaning, there is no longer a self-sustaining "wild" population of northern bobwhites in Michigan. Any northern bobwhites encountered within the state are now pen-raised escapees or intentional releases by hunting clubs and/or individuals.

On June 18, Peg Pinkowski photographed a northern water snake as it was consuming a bluegill fish near the shore of Singer Lake in Baroda Township. The northern water snake is a common, non-venomous snake found in or near fresh water. In addition to small fish, the northern water snake feeds on frogs, salamanders and crayfish. Occasionally, they will eat small mammals.

On June 16, Marge Yetzke of Bainbridge Township found a black rat snake in her yard. The black rat snake is Michigan's largest snake, with some adults reaching 7 to 8 feet in length! This non-venomous snake ranges over the southern half of Michigan's lower peninsula. The black rat snake feeds primarily on small birds and mammals. It is a constrictor, meaning it squeezes its prey before consuming it.

Black rat snakes are a species of special concern in Michigan, and they are protected by law. Numbers are declining in the state due to habitat loss, persecution and being run over by vehicles.

Jonathan Wuepper is an area naturalist. Report your sightings to him at wuepperj@gmail.com

Photo provided / Marge Yetzke

Black rat snake, June 16, Bainbridge Twp.

Photo provided / Peg Pinkowski

Northern water snake consumes a bluegill, June 18, near Singer Lake, Baroda Twp.

Jacqueline Lee / Dreamstime / TNS

A man and a woman on a small fishing boat with poles in the water and a net at the ready on Lake Superior.

Something's going on with these Lake Superior lake trout

By CAROL THOMPSON
The Detroit News (TNS)

DETROIT — There's something troubling happening to fish that live more than 600 feet below the surface of Lake Superior.

Researchers are increasingly finding emaciated lake trout, which they call "zombie fish," during deepwater surveys in Lake Superior. The emaciated fish's bodies are far thinner than their healthy counterparts.

It's unclear what is causing the fish to grow so thin, said Edward Baker, manager of the Michigan Department of Natural Resources Fisheries Division's Marquette Research Station. The cause could be limited food, a germ or disease, or bites from invasive sea lamprey.

Fish health experts from Michigan State University were to join DNR fisheries workers on a sampling trip last week to try to understand what's happening. The DNR research boat, RV Lake Char, was headed to Superior Maximus, the deepest point of Lake Superior at 1,300 feet deep. They'll collect samples from inside the fish's bellies to see what they have been eating and will look for sea lamprey bite wounds.

"When we bring up fish that are emaciated, (the MSU fish health experts) are going to be taking samples and taking fish back to the lab and trying to figure out if there's a pathogen involved," Baker said.

A pathogen is the worst-case scenario, Baker said, since it could spread to the lake trout that live in shallower waters and favored by anglers.

"That would be cause for serious concern for sure," Baker said. "Right now, it's more of a point of curiosity. We're observing a natural phenomenon that we don't know the cause of, so we're just trying to see if we can figure out what the cause is. We think it's nothing to be concerned about at this point."

Lake Superior lake trout population restored

The lake trout that live in the deepest parts of Lake Superior are called siscowet. They store a lot of fat in their flesh, which Baker said research believes helps keep them buoyant in deep water, where there is high water pressure.

In 2015, only 3 percent of the siscowet DNR fisheries workers netted in deep Lake Superior water were emaciated. In 2025, about 20 percent of the siscowet were emaciated. The numbers are worse at Superior Maximus. There, 37 percent of the fish were emaciated in 2024 and 54 percent were emaciated in 2025.

The Great Lakes Fisheries Commission's Lake Superior Committee members announced in 2024 that Lake Superior's lake trout population was "fully restored" after it had been decimated by sea lampreys and overfishing in the mid-20th century. The commission was established in 1954 to control sea lampreys, coordinate fishery management and rehabilitate lake trout. After decades of stocking lake trout in Lake Superior, the fish started reproducing naturally in the 1990s.

It was a major milestone, said Greg McClinchey, Great Lakes Fishery Commission director of policy and legislative affairs. As top predators in Lake Superior, lake trout are important to the lake's ecosystem.

"The lake trout are an absolute keystone species," he said. "It's critically important we understand what's going on with them. This is currently happening only in Lake Superior, so we want to be sure we understand why so it doesn't spread, or so if it does (spread) we're prepared to deal with it."

Like all lake trout in Lake Superior, siscowet are the top predator in deep water. They primarily eat deepwater sculpin, burbot and kiyi, fish that also live deep in Lake Superior.

Baker suspects a lack of food is not what's causing the emaciated fish. He pointed to footage collected by a remotely operated vehicle that traveled to the bottom of Superior Maximus early this month.

"I don't think there's a second of that video where there isn't a deepwater sculpin in that frame," he said. "I don't think it's a food limitation just based on that video."

Wanted: The Teton Range's few remaining mountain goats

By MIKE KOSHMRL
WyoFile

Every now and then, a hiker, climber or biologist lays eyes on a mountain goat in the nooks and crannies of the mighty Grand Teton Range in Wyoming.

There's a good likelihood that the unwanted, nonnative animal doesn't survive long after the authorities pinpoint its presence. That's because the National Park Service is now removing all mountain goats that survived an intensive three-year effort to rid the Tetons of the species.

A striking white alpine species, mountain goats are being targeted by gunners because they're seen as a threat to native bighorn sheep. Mountain goats are more aggressive, overlap habitat and can also spread diseases that can be catastrophic.

"We have seen mountain goats – and we have removed those when we have found them," Grand Teton National Park Superintendent Chip Jenkins told WyoFile in February. "We hire a private contractor who does the flying in terms of doing the survey, and we hire a private contractor who does the removal."

Those contracted crews are "highly specialized" in dealing with wildlife, he said.

Park rangers have enlisted the public in their efforts to keep mountain goats out of the Tetons. Signs have been posted at places like the Taggart Lake trailhead, and the messaging asks recreators to report, photograph and even record GPS points of bighorn sheep and mountain goats.

Teton Range bighorns are left alone. That native species has struggled for decades after development eliminated their migration routes and backcountry skiers encroached on their winter habitat. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department found just 80 bighorn sheep during its latest survey, though DNA analyses of scat samples suggest that some animals are missed during aerial surveys and the population is somewhat larger.

Mountain goats are managed much differently. The Park Service is trying to remove the remainder to protect the bighorns.

"We're in the perpetuity business," Jenkins told WyoFile. "We're working to be able to ensure that we've got bighorn sheep in the Tetons forevermore."

During high-profile efforts to wipe them out from 2020 to 2022, some of the nonnative goats were missed.

Mountain goats reached the Tetons in the late 1970s from the Snake River Range population introduced by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game. By 2008, they were observed reproducing, and the National Park Service first proposed eliminating the population in 2013, when an estimated "10 to 15" animals inhabited the range. It took nearly seven years to push those plans through, though, and by the time aerial gunners took flight in early 2020, the population had ballooned to about 100 animals.

Some three dozen goats were killed in that operation.

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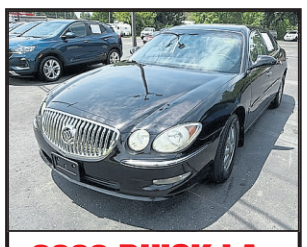

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